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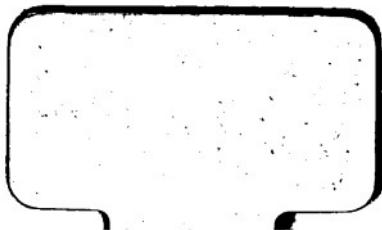
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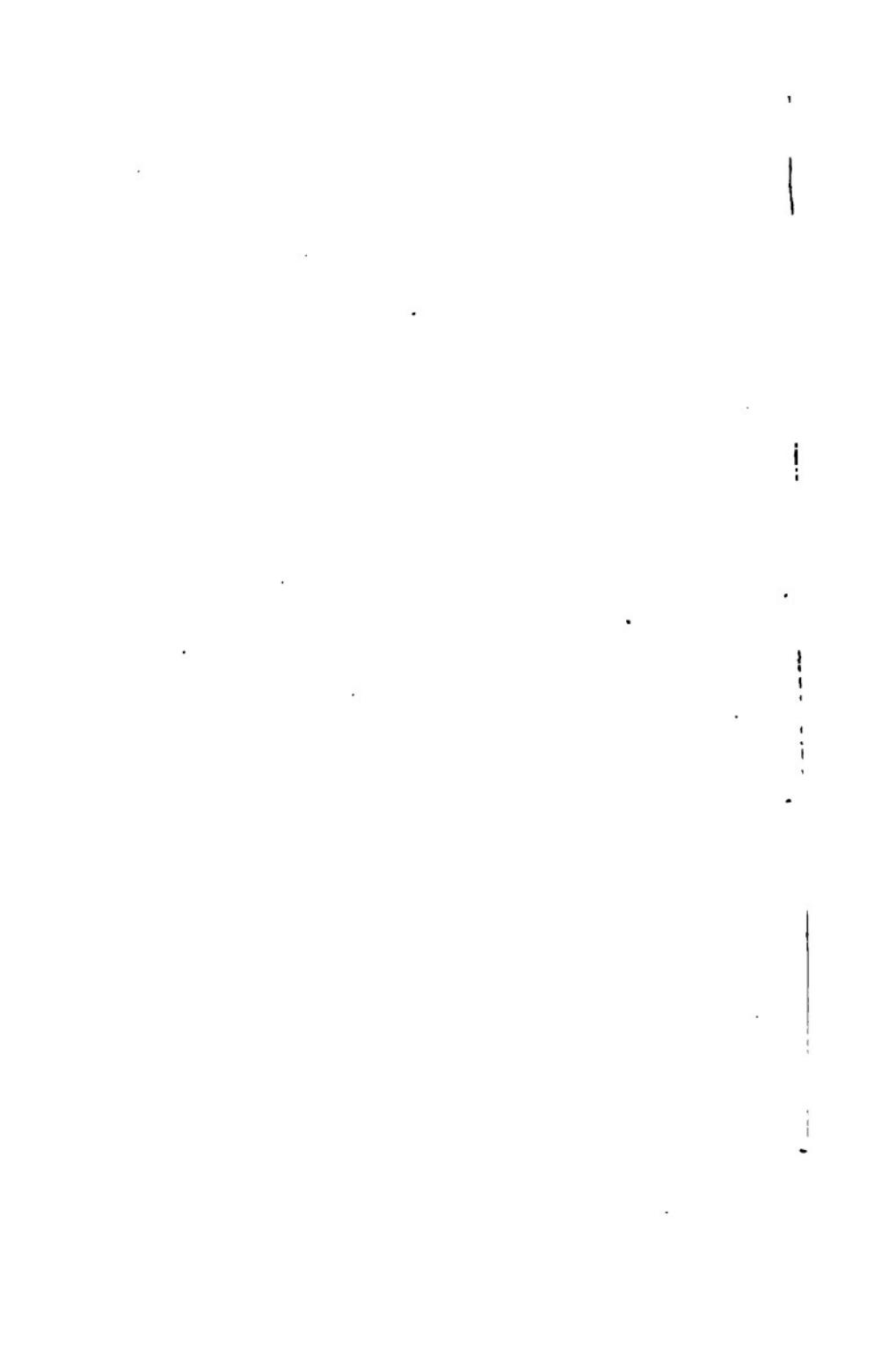
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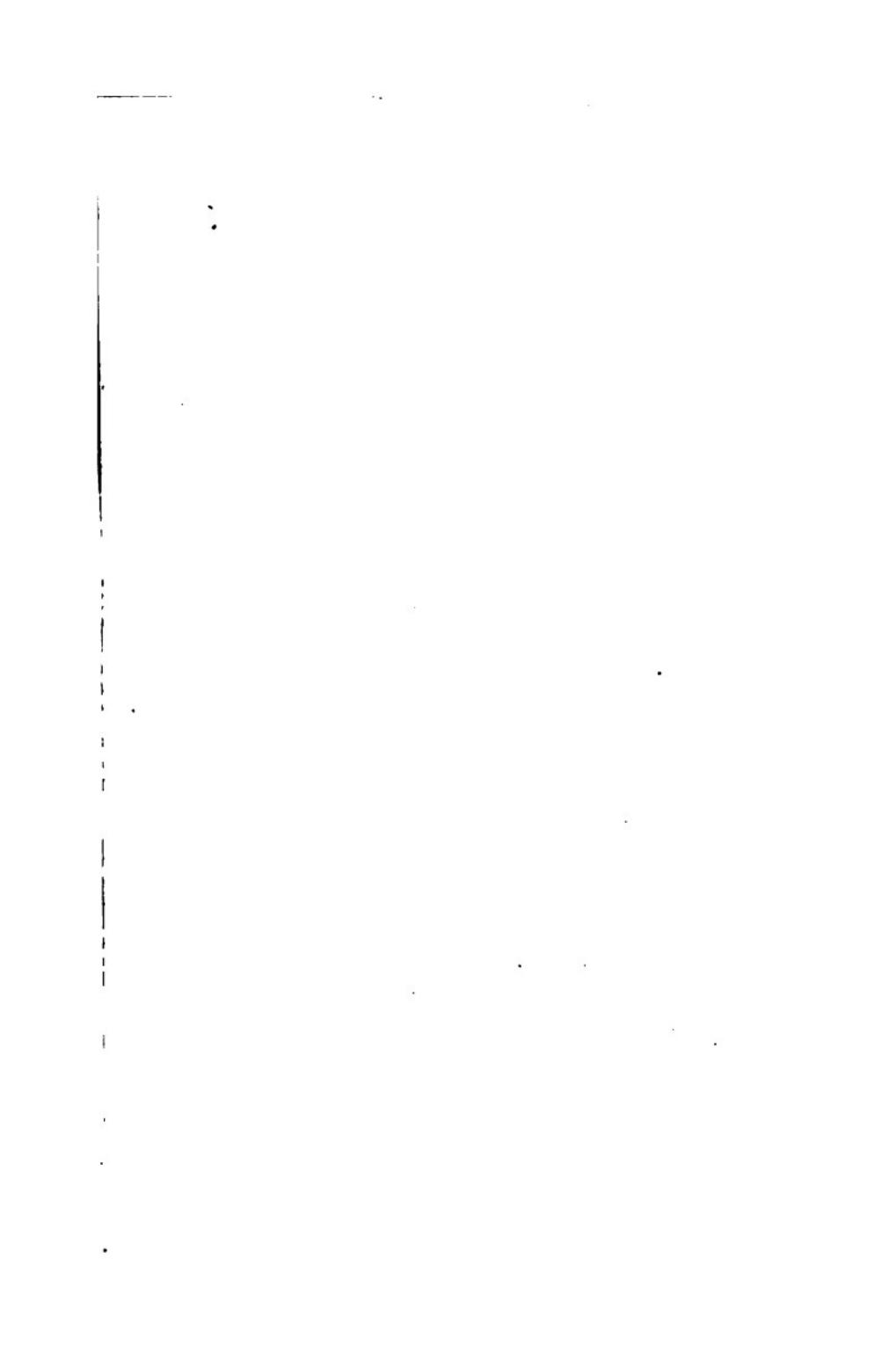


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Leave it all in His high hand,
Who doth hearts as streams command.

"OUR WILLIE:"

OR,

HOME TEACHING.

BY MRS. W. H. COATES,

**AUTHOR OF "LOOK UP; OR, GIRLS AND FLOWERS;" "GRACE
DERMOTT;" "ISABEL: OR, INFLUENCE;" ETC.**

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O U R W I L L I E.

OUR WILLIE! Household words!
Canst thou utter them in mirth?
Are they daily, fireside sounds?
Is their music still of earth?
Dost thou shout them forth in gladness,
Or softly murmur in thanksgiving,
When you pray at morn and evening
For the loving and the living?

Our Willie! Household words!
Sound they sadly in thine ears?
Dost thou sigh to hear their music?
Dost thou echo them with tears?
Sorrowing father! God hath only
Taken back what first was given;
Loving mother! cease to weep
For your little one in heaven.—E. C.

It may be that some child, beholding this little work, will exclaim wonderingly, "Oh, mamma, some one has written a book about our Willie!" Not so, dear child. There are a great many

Willies in the world besides yours. It is a common name. There are few families, comparatively speaking, that have not, or have not had, a Willie. Many a glad and loving mother will smile when she reads the title ; while some, perchance, may weep.

The name of Willie is to be found upon many a little grave in the churchyard, and is written in many a bereaved and sorrowing heart. We have heard it echoing through the house like a strain of sweet music ; and spoken with pale lips by the lonely hearth. We have watched the fond and busy mother at her labour of love, intent on the manufacture of some little coat or dress, and thinking how beautiful "our Willie" will look in them when finished ; and we have seen her, pale and thoughtful, fold up those very garments, scarcely worn, and place them silently in a drawer or box, sad and touching relics of the past, to be looked upon only when alone. We have listened to the proud and joyous question, "What do you think of our Willie ?" and also to the touching lament, "If he had but lived !" God help and comfort all

such bereaved and sorrowing hearts ; and sanctify the removal of these beloved ones, as a means of bringing them nearer to Himself.

We remember mingling in the birthday sports of a dear little boy, in whom we were much interested. All appeared to be mirth and gladness, when a low, sad voice was heard addressing some one who sat near her :

“‘Our Willie’ would have been just his age, if it had only pleased God to spare him. They were born on the same day. How he would have enjoyed all this ! I could almost fancy just now that I heard him laugh. What a merry laugh he had ; and how merry and playful he always was—my poor Willie !”

We have seen a little curl of silken hair, a tiny cap and feather, a drum, a whip, a child’s picture-book, a half-finished boat, from which the young workman had been called away in the midst of his labour ; all telling their own tale of those whom God had taken.

A poor widow who had seen better days, and now lived all alone in a little cottage by the sea-shore, once showed us some rare stones and

shells, which she greatly valued—not because of their rarity, but for his sake who had brought them, she told us, from foreign parts.

"It was a sad day," said she, "when our Willie went away, but his heart was set upon it, and it was no use contradicting him. The sound of the sea, he used to say, was ever in his ears, just as if he had been holding one of these shells there, and so heard it singing. Nothing would do but he must be a sailor. What did he care about its being a hard life—my fearless boy! Never shall I forget his face when he came home after his first voyage, and poured all his little savings into my lap. It was then he brought these things, to remind me of him, he told me, when he was far away upon the ocean. There was no need of that. He never returned again. The ship sank, and all on board perished."

The writer of this book loves little children dearly ; and not a few love her. She likes to be with them, and talk to them, and play with them ; and write about them, and for them ; and knows a great deal concerning their ways, and thoughts, and tempers, and histories. She

loves to see them happy, and full of life and gladness. But she loves still more to see them gentle and obedient, and followers of Him who, while upon earth, took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them, saying "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God."* Jesus loves little children. Oh that all little children would love the Lord Jesus Christ. It would not grieve us then to behold their graves in the green churchyard, because we should know that their happy spirits were with Him in glory.

Even children have their little troubles. Sometimes they are sick and in pain ; but there is no pain or sickness in heaven. Sometimes they fall into sin and temptation, and then they are sorry ; but there is no sin in heaven. Sometimes they are weary of good things ; weary of their bibles, and of the Sabbath day, and of prayer ; and they feel that this is wrong ; but there is no weariness in heaven, where they will rest not day nor night playing on the golden

* Mark x. 14.

harps, which God will give them, and singing, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come!" Little children are sometimes called upon to weep for the loss of fond parents, or friends, but there will be no weeping in heaven. God Himself will wipe away all tears from their eyes.

Oh, that all mothers would try and bring their children to that loving Saviour. And it is of no use trying without praying. We had almost questioned, Can any woman be a mother, and not pray? Alas! that it should be so. The solemn responsibility of such is too great to be borne alone, in their own frail human strength. They will need God's help every step of the way, even to the end of their labour of love. Beautiful is a mother's affection. Vast and undying a mother's influence, either for good or evil. It is her hand that must sow the good seed in the heart of her child, watering and cherishing it with tears and prayers, and looking to the God of the harvest for an abundant increase. It is her voice that must first make known to them the sweet name of Jesus, and teach their infant

hearts to expand with love and gratitude to Him who loved, and washed them from their sins in His own blood.

A good and pious minister of Christ, speaking of his mother, once said, "I lost her when I was only a little child, and, child-like, should most probably have soon forgotten her. But when evening came, and I retired to my chamber to pray, as she had taught me, her presence seemed to be ever with me. I could almost imagine that she was still kneeling by my side, and I did not know but that she might at least be looking down upon me from heaven. I listened for her voice, and wept. I opened my little bible, her gift, and it spoke to me even in the very words I had so often heard her speak. From that time the memory of my mother became associated with all that was good and holy; and now that I am old and grey-headed, I still think of her with love and reverence."

Happy, yea blessed, are those mothers who have deserved to be remembered thus.

We have said that Willie is a common name upon earth. Let us hope, too, that there are

many Willies in heaven. We know, or rather knew, some who, having given clear evidence of their love to Jesus, while here, are gone to be with Him for evermore above. And several little pilgrims of that name, very dear to us, are still journeying towards the celestial city. It is for the benefit of the latter, and of all such of *every name and country*; as well as for the guidance and consolation of those loving or sorrowing mothers, who have, or have lost, one of these dear little ones, by whatever name they may have called them, that these pages are written.

WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR.

Chapter First.

O 'tis a sweet and solemn thing,
 A mother's name to bear;
 And calleth for much watchfulness,
 And deep and earnest prayer.—E. C.

WILLIE CAMPBELL was quite a child when some one, half in sport, and half in earnest, bestowed upon him the above appellation.

"So," said his father, smiling on the little sturdy fellow sitting on his knee, "so you are called William the Conqueror, are you? We must see if we cannot conquer you, by-and-by."

His mother sighed, and then meeting her husband's inquiring glance, smiled also; but it was a forced smile.

"You think, perhaps, that it will be a somewhat difficult task?" asked Mr. Campbell.

"I hope not," was the reply.

"I hope not indeed, as it will have to be done. And so, my boy, you are a sad little tyrant, are you?"

"William the Conqueror was a tyrant, papa," was the evasive reply.

"What for, Willie?"

"Why, for making everybody go to bed at eight o'clock, whether they liked it or not," answered the child, with an arch glance towards his mother's watch, which she held in her hand.

Mr. and Mrs. Campbell both laughed; who could help it?

"How quick and clever he is," said his mother, when Willie had retired quietly enough with his nurse; for he stood somewhat in awe of Mr. Campbell.

"Yes, he is quick enough, and will, I think, be clever. But you must take care, my dear Mary, or that child will be your master."

Mrs. Campbell dared not tell him that he was her master already. How often had she threatened Willie that she would do so, but she never did, and, as the child well knew, loved him far

too much to subject him to his father's deserved rebuke, and, perhaps, severe punishment. Many a fond and loving mother has, in like manner, been the ruin of her child.

Willie was a high-spirited and intelligent boy. Like most children he was a keen observer of what passed around him, from which he drew his own inferences, and formed his own plan of action. It was not long before he found out that he could do as he liked with his mother, and consequently most members of the household ; and also that he must be on his good behaviour when his papa chanced to be at home, which, unfortunately for him, seldom occurred until quite late in the day.

Mrs. Campbell deeply felt that she had lost all power over the wayward heart of her child ; still, he was but a child as yet, and much might have been done, with God's help, towards redeeming the past. But she forgot, or neglected, to seek that help, and going on in her own strength, which, with the best of us, is but weakness, had recourse to subterfuge (for we will not now call it by any graver name), to

enforce her commands—doing evil that good might come, as if it ever did come thus.

When the business of the day was over, Mr. Campbell generally found time to devote to the blended amusement and instruction of his little son, which time Willie greatly enjoyed. By these means he already knew something of history and geography. In the perusal of the former, his father was very careful to draw and enforce, if possible, some moral lesson which might be useful and easily remembered. And if there was one thing upon which he dwelt more than another, it was not only the virtue, but the necessity, of perfect truthfulness.

“Papa,” said Willie, one memorable evening, when the conversation had taken this turn, “is it only wrong for little boys to tell lies?”

“It is wrong for every one.”

“Is it wrong for mamma?”

“I do not understand you, Willie,” replied his father, gravely; “your mamma never says what is untrue.”

“Oh, but she does though,” replied the child; and then catching a glimpse of his mother’s

downcast eyes and crimson cheeks, he paused suddenly.

"Go on," said his father sternly.

"Go on," repeated Mrs. Campbell, observing that he still hesitated, and fearing lest his silence should make her husband angry with him. She did not think of herself, and could not even guess what was coming.

"You know that you do say what is not true, mamma," continued Willie, turning towards her with a deprecating look. "You said so the other day when you told me that there was something in your bonnet box that would bite me, if I went near it. I looked in after you were gone, just to see, but there was only your new bonnet. And when I asked you for some of aunt Lucy's wedding cake, you said that it was all eaten, and I saw a great piece in the cupboard. You often say those sort of things."

"Your mamma could not have known but what the cake really was eaten," observed Mr. Campbell, after a pause.

"Oh, yes she did, I saw her put it away herself just before."

Mr. Campbell glanced from the child's eager face to the flushed countenance of his wife, and then putting him down from off his knee, left the room without uttering a word, and they heard him go into his own study, and shut the door after him. Mrs. Campbell burst into tears.

"Don't cry, mamma," whispered Willie, putting his little arms round her neck. "I am sorry I told papa about your not always speaking the truth. I hope he is not going to punish you."

"God knows," sobbed the unhappy mother, "that I am already sufficiently punished."

"Mamma! I cannot bear to see you cry," exclaimed the child, weeping also. "It does not seem natural for grown-up people to cry. If you would only go to papa and tell him that you are very sorry, and that you will not do so any more, I am sure he will forgive you; he always does me when I say that. Shall we go, mamma?"

"I dare not," replied Mrs. Campbell, in a low voice.

"You need not be afraid; papa is only angry when people have done wrong. He likes to see them sorry for it."

Mrs. Campbell felt it a relief to hear the voice of Willie's nurse on the stairs.

"Go to her, my child," said she, "I do not want her to come in here. And be sure that you do not say anything about all this to Ann."

"She will not ask me. Ann never asks questions; but if she should I must tell her the truth, you know, mamma."

"Certainly you must," replied his mother, with a burning blush. "But she will not ask you—unless she sees these tears," added she, wiping them away, and kissing him tenderly. "Go now, dear child."

"Yes mamma, I will go directly; I will do anything if you will not cry."

Mrs. Campbell tried to smile, and to say good night cheerfully, but when he was gone she bowed down her head and wept bitterly. An hour passed away. What a long hour it appeared; and then she heard her husband come out of his study, and along the passage, with a slow and heavy tread. He paused at the door of the sitting-room; for the first time she hoped he would pass on, but he came in, closing

it behind him, and drew his chair to the side of the couch upon which she was sitting. Mrs. Campbell was afraid to look at him, and buried her face in the pillows.

“Mary,” said her husband, gravely but kindly, “I am sorry that I went away so abruptly just now. But what could I say to our child?”

“What you have always said, that there is not a more despicable being on the face of the earth than a liar! and let his mother be the example!”

“Hush, hush, Mary,” exclaimed her husband, soothingly, “what is past cannot be recalled, but it may be redeemed; you will be more careful in future.”

“Yes, I will, please God,” replied his wife in a gentler tone.

“It would be just as easy to tell Willie that he must not touch a thing, because you are afraid that he will spoil it; or because you do not wish it: that alone ought to be sufficient. Or, with regard to the cake, that it is too sweet, and would only make him ill.”

Mrs. Campbell made no reply; she would not accuse her child.

"No one knows better than I do, my dear Mary," continued Mr. Campbell, "I who have loved and trusted you so long, that you would be the first to shrink from telling a deliberate falsehood; that you would die sooner."

"Yes, indeed, indeed I would," replied his wife, earnestly. "But somehow—I thought, I fancied that there could be no harm about these little things, or rather I am afraid that I never thought at all."

"There are, I believe, a great many people in the world who argue as you do," said her husband. "Upright, conscientious men, whose word in business matters no one would ever dream of doubting. Mr. B. for instance. You have heard me speak of Mr. B.?"

"Frequently," replied Mrs. Campbell, "and most highly."

"Well, I was there the other day on some private business. His little son, a boy of five or six years of age, sat in the same room with us, writing on his slate, and as quiet as possible.

Presently a knock came at the hall-door. ‘Willie,’ exclaimed his father (his name was Willie), run directly and tell the servant to say that I have just gone down to the office. I shall be there as soon as they will, whoever it is.’ The child rose up with his little innocent face full of thought, and too intent, I trust, upon his sums to imbibe the pernicious lesson, to repeat the *lie* which his father had dictated. I could not help asking Mr. B. why he did not send word to his visitor that he was particularly engaged just now, but that he would be going to his office very shortly and would see him there. ‘What does it signify?’ said he, ‘it comes to the same in the end.’ ‘Only, replied I, ‘that such messages are apt to prove stumbling-blocks in the way of a young child seeking the narrow line of demarcation between truth and falsehood.’ Mr. B. laughed. But a moment after he added, gravely and even passionately, ‘Willie knows that if he were to venture to tell me a lie, I would flog him within an inch of his life!’ And I verily believe that he would have done, so strange and inconsistent as such conduct may appear.”

"I too," said Mrs. Campbell, in a low voice, "have placed a stumbling-block in the path of our child. I, who should have been his guide and example."

"All you have to do," replied her husband cheerfully, "is to remove it out of the way again as soon as possible."

"And so I will, with God's help," added Mrs. Campbell. "I am thankful to have seen my error before it was too late—if, indeed, it is not too late already, that Willie should ever learn to trust me again."

"It is not too late, Mary. You must be prepared just at first to see him a little sceptical, but it will soon pass away, and our dear boy learn to have the same implicit faith in you that his father has."

He kissed her tenderly as he spoke, and Mrs. Campbell felt comforted.

Chapter Second.

"Had I again my course to run
I would not do as I have done."

THE following morning, when Mrs. Campbell came down to breakfast, her cheeks looked pale, and her eyes red and swollen with weeping. Willie's heart smote him as he gazed upon her, for he could not help feeling that it was all his fault, for having told his papa. "She never told of me," thought the child, "let me be ever so naughty;" and he inwardly determined, that he would never do wrong or vex her again—a good resolution, if he had only kept it. As it was, his little attentions and fond caresses were very pleasant and soothing.

"Let me do it; please let me do it, mamma!" exclaimed Willie, every time that she moved, or attempted to move; and he watched so as to be ready to ring the bell, or save her trouble in any way that he could. His lessons, for a

wonder, were repeated without missing a word, and without even a glance towards the open window. And when his mother told him that he might go and play in the garden, if he pleased, before he did any thing else, Willie said, that he would rather remain with her, if she would let him, and sat close to her side on his little stool, holding her hand in his.

Presently a visitor was announced, who, observing Mrs. Campbell's altered appearance, immediately inquired if she was ill. Mrs. Campbell replied that her head ached sadly, and the lady did not stay very long in consequence.

"Mamma," said Willie, when they were again alone, fixing his bright, intelligent eyes upon her countenance as he spoke, "Does your head really ache?"

"Yes, very much indeed, Willie."

"I am glad of that," replied the child. "I do not mean to say that I am glad you have the headache—but—you understand mamma—I thought it was only an excuse, because you did not want Mrs. Graham to know that you had been crying."

"You mean a lie, Willie, not an excuse."

"I suppose papa would call it so," answered the child.

"Your papa would be quite right in so doing."

"Mamma," said Willie, "I should be afraid to say that I had the headache if it were not true, because God, you know, might make me have a real headache to punish me."

His mother did not reply, she was thinking how often she had dared to do so, and felt abashed and self-convicted by these innocent words.

"Could He not, mamma?" persisted the child.

"Certainly," said Mrs. Campbell. "God is all powerful—but then He is all merciful; just, and yet the Justifier of those who come unto Him through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Willie gazed at her with a wondering countenance.

"You do not understand me, my child."

"No, mamma."

"And yet you should do so at your age. But it is my fault, darling, and not yours."

Mrs. Campbell had been blessed with all the

advantages of a Christian home and education. Unhappily for her, her husband, although a strictly honourable and conscientious man, did not think so seriously as she had been taught to do about these things ; he considered that by regularly attending a place of worship, once at least on the Sabbath day, and subscribing liberally to all local charities for the relief of the poor and aged, he had done everything that was required of him. After service on the Sabbath, each member of the household did as they pleased ; and thus Sunday after Sunday passed into eternity, unrecognized, and unhallowed. It was a solemn thought. Mrs. Campbell grieved about it more at first than she did afterwards. The chains of habit are strong, either for good or evil. Although accustomed to bow in most things to the will of her husband, she knew in this one instance that she was right and he wrong. She fancied—and perhaps it was not mere fancy—that he loved her well enough to have listened, at least, to any request she might have urged. But day after day, and week after week, passed away in silence. She wanted courage to speak,

and gradually became less and less concerned about it.

Not that Mrs. Campbell ever neglected her own devotions. Every night and morning she shut herself up in her chamber, and spent a given time in reading the Scriptures, and in prayer. But it was the prayer of the lips only, her heart being filled up with earthly thoughts and cares, in consequence of which she brought nothing away with her ; no token either in word or deed that she had been with Jesus and learned of Him. Many bitter tears were shed over her own weakness and short-comings. She deeply felt how unworthy she was to be the guide of another, and shrank almost as much from Willie's intelligent questions, as she did from her husband's indifference. And thus the child would have grown up in utter ignorance of that which it was most essential for him to know, but for his nurse, a good and pious woman who had lived with her mistress when she herself was a little girl.

And yet Mrs. Campbell professed to love her child, and to be ready,—ay, and so she would

have been,—to lay down her very life, if needful, for his sake. It is not thus that Christian mothers love their children; it was not thus that John Newton's mother loved, and instructed, and prayed for and with her wayward boy, from whom it pleased God to call her when he was but seven years of age, leaving behind a life-long impression upon his childish spirit, which was never again to pass away. What a sweet, and yet what a solemn responsibility rests upon the head of a mother. Well may she rejoice with trembling. Humanly speaking, it is a mother's hand which fixes the impress of character, not only upon her own children, but in a greater or less degree upon all whom they in turn shall influence from generation to generation.

"Mamma," said Willie, in a low voice, "I know whom you mean by the Lord Jesus Christ. Nurse often talks to me about Him, and I pray to Him every night that little prayer you taught me. I have not forgotten it, and very often nurse lets me add something out of my own head. Shall I tell you what I added last night, mamma, but not aloud, because you did not want her to

know anything about it. And God hears us if we only whisper."

"Yes, if we only think a prayer."

"Well," continued the child, drawing closer to her and hiding his little face in her gown, "last night when I had said, Please God to make me a better boy, I put in, And forgive dear mamma; was that wrong?"

The mother's heart was too full for words, and she bent down and kissed him in silence.

"You are not angry with me, are you?" inquired Willie.

"Angry! my precious child!" and her tears fell fast.

"Mamma," continued Willie, "I have made a resolution not to be naughty, or to tease you any more. But you must not cry; it will only make your head worse."

"It does not ache now so very much," said Mrs. Campbell, "you have done both my head and my heart good."

"I, oh I am so glad! may I fetch your smelling bottle, mamma? and arrange the pillows for you? I know just how Ann does it."

“Thank you, my child, I think I will lie down a little,” replied Mrs. Campbell. And when he had brought her smelling bottle, and drawn down the window blinds, and made her comfortable, as he called it, she closed her eyes wearily; and Willie, believing that she slept, stole quietly away to his usual amusements. But Mrs. Campbell could not sleep. She communed with her own spirit, and was still. The past rose up like a dream, with all its long buried memories and associations. She was a child again, listening to the gentle voice of her good and pious mother. A bride, going forth from her happy home full of bright hopes, and good resolutions. A mother herself, trembling, rejoicing, praying. The same voice that appeared to sound in her ears as she pressed to her bosom her new-born treasure, still haunted her, “Bring up this child for me.” Once again her heart made answer that it should be all her care, all her desire to do so; and this time she remembered to add, “Lord, help me! Of mine own self I can do nothing. I am very weak, but Thy strength is made perfect in weakness. O Lord Jesus Christ, be Thou my Helper.”

Chapter Third.

"Leave it all in His high hand
Who doth hearts as streams command."

MRS. CAMPBELL found it more difficult than she had anticipated, to regain the lost confidence of her child. Sometimes when she told him anything, he would ask with an arch smile—for he had no idea of the pain which his words inflicted—"But are you quite, quite sure, mamma?" and even when he said nothing, she could often see him silently testing for himself the truth of her observations. At such times the unhappy mother felt as if her heart would break. She forbore to say any thing to her husband, not knowing what he would do; since to remonstrate with the boy would but make matters worse. Her only hope was, that he would, after a time, forget what had passed, and learn to trust her again. But the memory of childhood is strangely tenacious.

It was a hard trial; but Mrs. Campbell felt that she had deserved it, and tried to bear it patiently. It was good for her, and made her very careful and circumspect: but it was a bitter thing to know that her words were watched and weighed in the balance of a child's mind, and that child her own; so heavy and bitter that she oftentimes felt tempted to exclaim, "My punishment is greater than I can bear!"

Willie, as we have said, never dreamt of the pain he was inflicting. His affectionate heart was full of love for that meek and gentle mother. It perfectly appreciated her tenderness and devotion in all his little troubles and sicknesses; and remembered how frequently she had stood between him and the threatened punishment so well deserved. How she had ever screened him from his father's anger, and borne with all his waywardness without a murmur. And how, when he repented of having grieved her, she believed and trusted so readily and kindly in all his promises of amendment, and forbore to chide because they were so soon forgotten. It was no wonder that Willie loved his mother.

After a time Mrs. Campbell fell ill. She did not complain, but appeared to grow weaker and weaker every day: and when her husband, who, owing to his frequent absence from home, was the last to notice her indisposition, proposed having medical advice, she immediately and eagerly assented.

The doctor said but little—doctors seldom do before a patient—but asked her a great many questions, and looked very grave at the replies which he received. Mrs. Campbell took the alarm; and when he had retired into another room with her husband, she folded her hands, and prayed earnestly that her heavenly Father would spare her a little longer, only a little, before she went hence and was no more seen. Not that she was afraid to die, for she knew in whom she believed; and that God is willing and able to save to the uttermost all those who come unto Him by Jesus Christ. It was for her child's sake that she prayed to live. The language of her heart, like one of old, only from a purer motive, was: “I have sinned, yet honour me now, I pray Thee, before my child.”

Give me back his confidence. Let not my memory rest like a shadow on his future course, but as a light to guide him onward in the pathway of life. Strengthen me to be faithful to him, to myself, and to Thee. Spare me a little while, O my God, to redeem what is past."

As she sat thus, pale and trembling, Mr. Campbell returned, and drawing a chair to the side of the couch, sat down, looking just as he had done on that never-to-be-forgotten night. Mrs. Campbell shuddered at the recollection, and then, recovering herself by a strong effort, inquired what Dr. Meredith had said about her. •

"Does he think me very ill?" asked she.

"No; he says that you have something on your mind; and that all the medicine in the world will do you no good until that is removed. Is it so, my dear Mary?"

Mrs. Campbell paused a moment to lift up her heart in prayer, and then speaking rapidly, but with a clear, distinct voice, replied:

"William, it is breaking my heart to live as we do now, as if there were no God in heaven. To rise up in the morning, and lie down at night;

and eat and drink like the beasts of the field, without prayer and thanksgiving. It was not thus in the happy home from which you took me."

"And are you not happy now?"

"Can I be otherwise, with you and our dear Willie? But even this is not enough without God's blessing."

"I should be sorry to think that we were without it," said Mr. Campbell.

"Oh, my husband, has not God pronounced a curse upon the prayerless home—upon the families that call not on His name."

"And is this what makes you so ill?"

"It is breaking my heart," replied his wife, pressing her hand against her throbbing side; "that, and my own sinfulness."

"Mary," said Mr. Campbell, after a pause, "you remember the book of family prayer which I purchased the other day at a sale? I just looked into it at the time, and saw that it contained a portion of Scripture, together with a prayer for every day in the year. If it will be any comfort to you, I don't mind reading every

morning and evening, until you are well enough to do so for yourself; and you can have the servants called in, if you like. With regard to the other matter, you may tell Willie from me, that if he ever forgets to say grace for us after to-day, he shall go without his dinner as a punishment. Will that do?"

Mrs. Campbell could not speak, she could only smile upon him through her tears—tears of deep thankfulness. And this was the result of what she had so long feared and shrunk from. Even while she was yet praying, the Lord heard, and made all straight for her. It is often thus with the weak and trembling believer. "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

"With regard to your own sinfulness, as you call it," continued Mr. Campbell, "I only wish that every one in the world was only half as good as my meek and gentle wife."

"Oh, William, you must not say that, indeed you must not. It pains me. You forget that night, you forget about the untruths."

"I have never thought of it since. I felt sure that seeing your error as you did, you

would be careful to avoid it in future, for our child's sake."

"How I wish that Willie, too, would forget!" murmured Mrs. Campbell, half involuntarily.

"Do you mean to say that he has ever dared"—

"Never," interrupted his wife, turning very pale. "He has never alluded or referred to the circumstance; but I can see that the recollection of it still haunts him."

"Perhaps you only fancy this," said Mr. Campbell.

"It may be so."

"And now, are you perfectly satisfied, my dear Mary? and will you try and get well as fast as you can?"

"Yes, I will try; and I hope, if it please God, that I shall soon be better. Thank you for being so kind to me."

"You should have spoken before. Believe me, there is nothing I would not do to make you happy."

"With regard to the Sabbath day," began Mrs. Campbell, with a pleading look.

"Make your own arrangements, my dear, and I will see that they are carried out. The first member of the household who ventures to dispute them, leaves that minute. But you are not going to make us eat a cold dinner on that day, are you?" asked he, laughingly.

Mrs. Campbell did not think that it would have been any such great hardship; but she wisely forbore to attempt too many reforms at once, and answered in the same tone, that she believed she should be able to manage without that for the present, by letting the servants take it by turns to go to church.

"And you really think that they will go to church?"

"I hope so, and shall find means of ascertaining. At any rate, we shall have done our duty by them."

"And how often do you intend making me go?"

"I do not intend to *make* you do anything," replied Mrs. Campbell with a bright smile, "that is not the word for a wife to use."

"If you will only smile as you do now, Mary,

I promise to be very obedient. If you will only look like your own happy self once again."

"I am very happy now," exclaimed Mrs. Campbell, earnestly—"so happy and thankful."

Her husband saw that she looked pale and excited, and forbore to prolong the conversation.

"You must try and rest now," said he.

Mrs. Campbell promised him that she would; assuring him that she already felt better, and that his kind words had done her more good than Dr. Meredith's prescriptions ever could.

Chapter Fourth.

She turned and prayed,
"Lord, put into my heart what I shall say,"
For well she knew He hears us when we pray.—E. C.

MRS. CAMPBELL had much need both of thought and prayer. The task she had undertaken was no such easy one, and she prayed that God would spare and strengthen her for its accomplishment. Her husband's ready acquiescence in her wishes seemed to be an encouragement for her to persevere. She now determined to speak as frankly to Willie as she had done to his father; and she asked the Holy Spirit to put into her heart what she should say. An opportunity soon occurred. She had advised him not to go near a particular part of the garden, as there was a wasp's nest, and he might get stung. Presently afterwards, as she sat by the open

window, she heard the boy observe to the gardener, after hovering around the spot for some time : "Mamma says there is a wasp's nest."

"Here it is," replied the man, "you can see it if you come on this side of the border. But I advise you to keep your distance ; when I have time I will soon rout them all out."

"I do not want to see it," said Willie. "Mamma desired me not to go there. I only wanted to be sure that there really was any danger. Not that I am afraid of a wasp; but I do not want to disobey mamma."

Mrs. Campbell's heart beat fast as she listened. "He only wanted to be sure," thought she; "he did not believe me, and I have deserved that it should be so." She closed the window and leaned back pale and sad upon the couch, for she was still very weak. She had given Willie permission to play in the garden for half-an-hour before he took his writing lesson. She looked at her watch and saw that it still wanted ten minutes of the time, and although Mrs. Campbell never moved or spoke, audibly at least, for her lips kept moving, the interval was

not spent in vain. Willie returned punctually to his studies, and thinking that his mother slept, began quietly arranging his copy-book and pens to be ready when she should awake.

"I am not asleep," said Mrs. Campbell, in a low voice.

"I thought you were, mamma, by your being so still. But how pale you look. Is your head worse?"

"No, I am better; thank God."

"I am glad of that, and will you soon be quite well again?"

"I do not know, Willie: I hope so."

"And so do I hope so, mamma, and so does dear papa, and nurse, and everybody. I wish that Dr. Meredith could give you something to make you well all at once."

"That is impossible. But do you know, my dear Willie, you could do me quite as much good as Dr. Meredith."

"I, mamma!"

"Listen to me, my child. When you were a very little boy, you were often ailing. We never thought to have saved you. Many and

many a night have I walked about the room with you in my arms, trying to hush your cries; or sat watching by the bedside, expecting every moment would be your last. But God was pleased to bless the means used for your recovery, and spare you to our love. You were still, however, very delicate, although no one would think it to look at you now, and, seeing you so feeble, I humoured you more than I ought to have done. If you cried for anything, you had it immediately, lest to cry should make you ill again. It became a habit, and continued long after you were strong and well, and until you were justly called ‘William the Conqueror.’ It was your mother whom you conquered; the mother who had nursed, and watched over, and loved you only too tenderly.”

“Oh mamma! forgive me!” exclaimed the child, flinging his arms around her. “Pray forgive me.”

“It was my fault,” continued Mrs. Campbell. “I ought to have enforced that implicit obedience, which it is the duty of every child to pay to the commands of its mother; and if I had

found this difficult, to have had recourse to stronger measures. But I shrank from the temporary pain of seeing you punished as you deserved. Had I acted otherwise, it would have been better for us both this day; instead of which, I was tempted into the commission of a great sin, and to utter what was not true. It would have been sufficient to have said to a good and obedient little boy, 'My child, you must not touch this thing, or that thing.' Would this have been sufficient for you, Willie?"

"No, mamma," replied the little fellow, in a subdued voice, as he buried his tearful face in her lap, "it would not—but it shall be henceforth—indeed, indeed it shall be, if you will only forgive me."

"It was with this hope that I spoke to you on the subject. I am not angry with you, my child. I too have sinned; but ever since that night—you know what night I mean?"

"When I told papa?" said Willie, clinging closer to her.

"Yes; ever since that night when I saw my sin, and was sorry for it, and asked God to for-

give it for the sake of his dear Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, and help and strengthen me that I might never do so again; ever since that night, my lips have been kept from uttering aught but the truth."

Willie was silent; his heart already reproached him for its many doubts. "It was all my fault," thought he, "from beginning to end. My own dear indulgent mamma! if I had only been a good and obedient boy, all this would never have happened." The mother had won back her child.

Mrs. Campbell went on speaking.

"Now, what I want you to do, my dear Willie, is to ask God's forgiveness in like manner, as well as His help in time to come; and begin a new life as it were, from this day forward."

"And so I will," replied the child, lifting up his flushed and earnest face to hers; and adding a moment afterwards, "With God's help."

"Yes, that is the only way in which you can be sure of keeping your good resolutions. It will be difficult at first, but you will not find me a harsh judge."

Did he ever find her a harsh judge? Willie's grateful countenance answered for him.

"Depend upon it," continued his mother, "a child's only happiness and safety consist in obedience, first to God, and secondly to those whom God has placed over him. If he were to be allowed to follow the dictates of his own will but for one single day, the consequences might be fatal."

Willie appeared to be about to speak, but coloured, and remained silent. Mrs. Campbell read his thoughts.

"You were thinking that you should like to try for yourself, Willie; were you not?"

"Yes, mamma. But not because I doubted your word; I shall never do that again; but I could not help thinking that it would be very pleasant to have one's own way for a whole day."

Mrs. Campbell felt her heart throb with delight, when he began to speak, but she only said,

"The experiment has been tried, Willie. Although I do not approve of children trying

such experiments; it is better and happier for them to trust and believe. The boy who tried it is still suffering from its effects. After making himself feel quite ill with eating sweet cakes, and fruit, hitherto wisely denied; and doing much mischief, and falling into many dangers, which I have not time to relate; he went and laid himself down in a little pleasure boat which was always kept moored by the river side. The wind was high, but not high enough to keep the boat as much in motion as he wished. He desired, therefore, that it might be unfastened, and suffered to rock and float about at will, which was accordingly done. When, suddenly, a great gust of wind arose, and the boat was drifted out into the river, towards the sea. The child's father called to him to keep still and he would soon find means to rescue him from his perilous situation; but the little fellow was too much frightened to pay any attention to what was said, but, climbing upon one of the seats, stood holding out his arms imploringly towards the shore. Presently the boat lost her balance, and went over. It

providentially happened that one of the spectators could swim, and the boy was saved; but he has suffered ever since from the cold and fright, and is not like the same child."

"Mamma," said Willie, "I will not be like that foolish boy. From this day I will believe and trust all you tell me; and never want to judge for myself again,—if I can help it, that is."

Mrs. Campbell kissed him in silence. Her heart was too full for words.

"Was that what you meant when you said that I could do you more good than Doctor Meredith?" asked Willie. "Were you grieving to think what an ungrateful, disobedient child you had? And did that make you so ill?"

"I believe I shall be all the better for this explanation," replied his mother, with a bright smile, and feeling as if a heavy weight were removed from off her mind. "My illness was God's will, and doubtless for some wise and good purpose; but it is enough to know that it was sent by Him who doeth all things well. And now, my child," added she, putting back the hair from Willie's flushed and tearful coun-

tenance, "I am going out a little way in my garden chair, and you may go with me, if you like."

"I should like to be always with you, if I could," was the fond and caressing reply.

Mrs. Campbell trembled even while she rejoiced, for she was still very weak; and she knew not whether it might please God to spare her. But truly could she say from the depths of a grateful and adoring heart, "Thy will, O Lord, not mine, be done."

Chapter fifty.

Father, mother, child, united,
A little Christian band,
Travelling through earth's wilderness,
Towards the heavenly land.—E. C.

WILLIE never forgot the lesson thus imparted to him. We do not mean to affirm that he became a good and affectionate child all at once; but only that it was his constant endeavour, with God's help, and that every day the task grew more and more easy and pleasant. His mother, as she promised, was no harsh judge, but bore with him, and assisted him in keeping his good resolutions, or forgave him when he failed. She was the sympathizer in all his little sorrows, the sharer of his childish joys. They were nearly always together, and Mrs. Campbell availed herself of this precious intercourse, to lead him nearer to God, through Jesus Christ. She no longer prayed to live, for she knew that

if she were to be taken away, Willie would never, never forget her. The hymns which she taught him, the daily texts, so simply explained, the pencilled references in his little Bible, the sweet recollection of their morning and evening prayer together, would all remain to keep alive her memory in his heart, and shed a heavenly ray upon his future path.

Oh that all mothers would be careful to act thus! Life is very uncertain; death sure, and oftentimes sudden. They need not, then, fear to die, and leave their little ones to that Heavenly Father, that loving Saviour, in whom they have taught them to believe and trust.

Little children, too may die, and be scarcely missed or lamented, except by that gentle and sorrowing mother, who must needs love them, be they ever so wilful and disobedient. But very different are the tears shed over good and pious children; such as have come to Jesus, and learned of Him to be meek and lowly in spirit; very different will be the record of such, and the memory they leave behind.

We have heard it said of a little child who

had lately died: "His mother had no control over him. Every year he would only have become more and more rebellious. There is no knowing how it might have ended at last. It is best as it is." And we have also heard it said of one early brought to Christ, and taken home to be with Him for evermore in heaven: "He was an angel in the house. All seemed to be the better for his brief sojourn among them, and wept when he died, thinking of the good he would have done, had he remained upon earth."

Dear children, what, think you, will be said of you, if you, too, should be early taken?

Mrs. Campbell found it not an easy task to see about reforming a household, so long unaccustomed to the slightest control in religious matters. She was greatly aided in her endeavours by her husband's firm determination, and the wise counsels of her faithful nurse, of whom she was not too proud to ask assistance. The recollection of God's long suffering and forbearance towards herself, rendered her very patient with others. Everything came right by degrees; it always does when we work, and wait, and act,

and believe, and pray. One or two of the servants afterwards turned to love that which at first appeared to be only a burden and a restraint.

Sabbath after sabbath glided calmly and prayerfully away, as God's day ever should. Mrs. Campbell made it a rule, and a very good rule it is, to remove all books but those of a religious tendency from their usual sitting-room; and when her husband could not find what he wanted, rather than be the first to break through any of those regulations which he had promised her to sanction, and of which, perhaps, he inwardly approved, he would take up others of a far different class, placed there in their stead. They had all the charm of novelty, and he read them eagerly one after another. His world-wearied spirit soared up, as it were, into a new atmosphere of thought and feeling, and was purified and refreshed.

"I do like to hear our Willie say grace," observed he, one day, to his wife. "It seems to make our meals taste all the sweeter. Indeed, I often feel very, very thankful when I look at his bright little face, and you, my dear Mary,

restored, as it were, from the dead, and our comfortable and well-spread table, while there are so many poor and desolate hearts in the world ; and I am ready to exclaim in the language of this morning's lesson : 'Lord, what am I, that thou hast made me to differ?' By-the-bye," continued he, "I never mean to do again as I did yesterday. If I get up at four o'clock I will find time for prayers ; nothing seemed to go right with me all day afterwards."

"I have heard many persons observe the same," replied Mrs. Campbell ; "and experienced it for myself more than once, although, as you say, I hope never to do so again. We are sure to fall into all sorts of troubles and difficulties, when we venture to forget or neglect God ; and do not deserve that He should preserve us from, or help us out of them, as at other times."

"And yet," thought Mr. Campbell, "I have been doing this all my life ;" and the consideration of the mercy and forbearance of his God and Saviour, made a deep and lasting impression upon him.

Blessed be God, good is almost as contagious

as evil. Few can breathe the sweet atmosphere of a Christian home, without being the better for it. The memory of a text, a hymn, rises up at times, when we least expect it, and goes with us into the busiest haunts of life.

After a little while, Mr. Campbell no longer retired to his study on a Sunday afternoon, to sleep or read, as the case might be, while his wife and child pondered God's Holy word together, the former questioning and explaining; the latter replying with singular quickness and intelligence: but would sit down at a short distance, holding an open book before his face, into which he looked but seldom. At such times the heart of the stern man was like that of a little child, only that he felt he could not have answered as Willie did; and that he was utterly ignorant of all that it was most important for him to know. One day when they were left alone he asked his wife if she would not teach him also. The reader may guess how happy that made her; and will be glad to learn that in process of time, with God's blessing, they all became a united Christian family.

The name of "William the Conqueror" is only to be met with amidst the childish chronicles of the past. And yet Willie was a true hero now, for, with God's help, he had gained the mastery over his own wayward will ; the hardest battle that man or boy can fight, and the noblest victory he can achieve.

Mrs. Campbell is still alive. "Her children rise up and call her blessed ; her husband also, and he praiseth her."*

* Prov. xxxi. 28.

THE GATHERED FLOWER.

Chapter first.

"O, not in cruelty, not in wrath,
The Reaper came that day ;
'Twas an angel visited the green earth,
And took the flowers away."—LONGFELLOW.

WILLIAM HOWARD was the youngest of a large family of brothers and sisters ; the pet of the household. Many were the fond, endearing names by which he was known. His mother sometimes called him "her bird," because he was so blithe and merry ; or "her little lamb," when he was good and gentle ; but the most common appellation was "Our Willie." Even his sister Isabel, only a few years older than himself, spoke of him thus. It was a term of appropriation, as if he belonged to them all.

It is related of a young child, that upon being once asked, "How is it that every one loves

you?" he immediately replied, with touching simplicity and great truthfulness, "I do not know indeed, unless it is because I love everybody." That is the real secret of affection. We must love in order to be loved. Willie, too, loved everybody, and everybody loved him, even strangers ; and yet he was not beautiful, although few could look on that pale, intelligent face, and those large, earnest eyes, without being favourably impressed.

Mrs. Howard had a custom of going round every night after the children were in bed, to see that they were safe and comfortable, and that they wanted nothing. At these times, she used to tell them quietly of anything she had seen amiss in their conduct during the day. The consciousness of having deserved her gentle rebuke—for she was ever gentle with them—often made them weep and tremble when they heard her step on the stairs ; but they always felt happier afterwards, when she had forgiven and blessed them, and asked God to forgive and bless them also for His dear Son's sake ; and would fall into a sweet and peaceful slumber

with the tears, perhaps, still wet upon their cheeks.

Mrs. Howard could remember that it was her mother's custom when she was a child ; and now that she was a woman and a mother herself, the effect of it remained in the habit of self-examination thus early implanted, and which she trusts to impress in like manner upon the minds of her own children.

There was something in the hush and quiet of evening; in the stillness of their little chambers, in the consciousness of being alone with that gentle mother, under the eye of God, that made those nightly visits long and deeply remembered. The children looked back to some of them with chastened and subdued spirits, and forward with new hopes and resolutions. If they had learned to feel their own weakness, they had also learned where strength is to be found. Sometimes they could not recollect anything that had been done amiss ; but they were not quite certain, for Mrs. Howard's memory in such cases was often better than theirs, but her smile would reassure them. These were happy evenings. Sometimes she

looked grave and sorrowful ; and then they were sorry too, not only for the fault itself, but for having grieved this good mother.

Willie slept in a little room within that of his parents. He was a timid child, and was afraid to be alone after dark, although he could not tell exactly what it was that he feared. Many children dislike the darkness without knowing why. Little boys should never be afraid of anything, except doing wrong. His mother told Willie so ; but she knew that would not be sufficient ; so she read to him about Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the burning fiery furnace; and Daniel in the lions' den, and told him that although a host of wicked men, or spirits, were actually about his bed, not one could touch a hair of his head unless it was God's will, any more than the flames had power to hurt those three holy men, or the lions to destroy the prophet Daniel ; so that he had only to put his whole trust in God, and take courage.

Willie laid these things to heart, and did take courage. Hitherto a candle had always been left burning until his papa and mamma came to

bed ; but one night, of his own accord he asked to have it taken away. "Only please," said he, "to leave the blind a little way up, that I may see the stars."

His mother did so, calling him her brave boy. Willie's heart beat fast when she left him at length, for she had purposely lingered longer than usual on that night ; but he looked at the bright stars and was comforted. And when the wind arose, and the fragrant woodbine went tap, tap, against the window pane like some one wanting to be let in, he prayed earnestly, and soon fell asleep. The following morning Mrs. Howard laughingly explained the innocent cause of the alarm ; and many such laughs did they have together, although she was too wise to expose him to the ridicule of his brothers and sisters. Even his little weaknesses were sacred in her eyes ; and he felt that they were, and so frankly confessed to her every thought and feeling of his heart.

Mrs. Howard loved all her children with equal affection ; but Willie was the youngest and the most helpless : and then he was not

quite so strong as the others had been at his age, although singularly quick and intelligent. The constitution of children differs as much as their mental powers. To one, God frequently appears to give five talents ; to another only two : and it should be a mother's care to see that the former be not too much exalted, or the latter depressed and disheartened.

The little sturdy Isabel was very apt to pride herself upon her bodily strength, and to laugh at Willie for being so soon tired. While he, in his turn, frequently felt tempted to boast that he could master all his lessons, in which he was quite as far advanced as herself, in the time it took her to learn one. Their mother's watchful eye kept down, as far as she could, these evil dispositions. She would ask Isabel, if they were going out together, to take care of Willie, and see that he did not fatigue, and make himself ill. A charge which the little girl faithfully and lovingly performed ; watching over him and offering him her strong arm to lean upon if he was weary. In like manner, Willie helped her at her tasks.

"If God has given either of you health or intellect," said Mrs. Howard, "it is in order that you may employ it to His glory; which you cannot do more effectually at present, than by mutually assisting, and being kind to one another."

One day, when they were on a visit to their cousins, and a nutting party was proposed, in a pleasant wood at some distance off, Isabel, much to their astonishment, for she greatly enjoyed anything of the sort, declined accompanying them.

"I thought you would have liked it, Isabel," said her aunt.

"So I should, dear aunt, very much indeed. But, you see, our Willie is not strong, and I think it would be too far for him to walk."

"In that case, he might remain at home with me."

"Thank you, aunt, but I would rather not leave him, if you please," replied Isabel, remembering how early Willie had arisen that morning, in order to help her with her lessons.

Thus did the brother and sister grow up together, becoming every day more and more attached, and more necessary to each other's comfort and happiness.

Chapter Second.

Childhood's prayer, with its accents sweet;
While the mother bends to hear,
With upraised eyes, and flushing cheek,
And a rainbow smile and tear.
She knows that little whispering voice
Is heard above in heaven ;
And that angels watch and smile with her
O'er the child, through Christ forgiven !—E. C.

IF we were to say that Willie was faultless, we should not be telling the truth. All children have their faults ; but his mother took great pains to try and cure him of his, and he took pains with himself. Upon one occasion, when his elder sister would not permit him to do something on which he had set his mind, he became very angry, and struck at her with his clenched fist. But she only laughed and drew back, and presently Willie began to laugh also, and soon forgot all about it.

That evening, when Mrs. Howard came as usual to kiss and bid him good night, Willie wondered

to see no smile upon her face, and began to think what he could have done to grieve her. He was not suffered to remain long in suspense.

"My child," said she, "have you forgotten that you were angry with your sister to-day, and attempted to strike her?"

"Yes, mamma, because"—Willie hesitated, and only added, "Yes, mamma, I had forgotten; I am very sorry."

"And I am sorry too," said his mother, "because you have displeased God. Shall we ask his forgiveness?" continued she, after a pause, which was broken only by the sobs of the penitent boy. And then, kneeling down by the bedside, they prayed together in few and simple words.

Willie felt comforted. The pale moon shone into that little chamber with her soft and gentle light, while a calm peacefulness filled the hearts of the mother and the child. Such peace as only those can know who feel that their sins are forgiven them for Jesus Christ's sake.

"Of what are you thinking, my Willie?" asked his mother, at length.

"Of the Lord Jesus Christ, mamma. I was wondering what little children would have done without a Saviour."

"Or any one," replied Mrs. Howard.

"But children especially, who are so weak and helpless."

"The little lambs of the fold," said his mother, "whom our blessed Saviour, rather than one should be left behind, is represented as taking into His arms, and carrying in His bosom."

"Mamma," said the child, earnestly, "when I am good you sometimes call me your little lamb; but I am afraid that I shall never be good enough to be one of Christ's lambs."

"It was for that very reason," replied Mrs. Howard, "that He laid down His life for the sheep, and suffered a cruel and violent death, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. Fear not, my child, you have a tender Shepherd—only continue to love and trust Him."

"Mamma" said Willie, "I cannot help loving Him."

As they spoke together thus, "the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance

was written before Him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I made up my jewels."*

The following morning, Willie asked pardon of his sister, of his own accord, for having been so angry and impatient the day before, who assured him she had forgotten all about it.

"So had I," said Willie, "until mamma reminded me of my fault."

"You did not hurt me, dear."

"But I might have done so. Cain killed his brother."

His sister could scarcely forbear smiling, when she looked at the little hand that had been raised against her; but seeing how much in earnest he was, she kissed him affectionately, and turned away in silence.

When Willie was quite a child, some one made him a present of a little waggon, which he used to fill with stones out of the garden, or anything he could conveniently procure, and draw about with great glee. Sometimes Isabel

* Mal. iii. 16, 17.

would play horse, and many were the pleasant hours thus spent. One day, much to Mrs. Howard's surprise, he brought it to her, and asked if she would have the kindness to keep it for him, for a week, where he could not even see it.

"Certainly, if you wish it," was the reply.

"Yes I do wish it very much. Shall I tell you why, mamma?"

"If you like, my son."

"Mamma," said the little fellow, drawing closer to her, and lifting up his large eyes to hers, beaming with affection, "I like to tell you everything. Did you notice how naughty I was yesterday in church? But I could see that you did, although you said nothing."

"Yes, I saw that you were restless. But I knew you were not quite well, and it was a very hot day."

"It was not the heat, mamma," said Willie. "For the last two or three Sundays it has been the same. I cannot help thinking of what I ought not, and mostly of my little waggon. I did try, and had made up my mind to be so good. I think it would help me to remember,

and keep my good resolutions, if I were to punish myself by not playing with it for a whole week."

"Mrs. Howard told him that she was glad he had sufficient self-denial to make the experiment; and taught him a little prayer against wandering thoughts, which Willie was not long in learning *by heart*, in every sense of the term, for he really did want to cure himself of his faults.

"Mamma," said Willie, "I know that you never appear to be restless in church; but do your thoughts never wander?"

"Yes, sometimes they do, and nothing but prayer will fetch them back again, and fix them where they ought to be."

"Supposing," said the child, in a low voice, "that I were to creep out of the church some morning, and go and sit in the porch, on a tomb-stone, where I could feel the wind blowing, should you be thinking of me?"

"I am afraid I should. But why do you ask?"

"Because, sometimes I cannot see the reading

in my prayer book ; and the clergyman's voice seems a long way off ; and I feel just as if I should fall, and long to have the wind blowing in my face. But it goes away again."

" Did you feel this last Sunday?"

" No mamma, it was all the fault of my waggon then ; or rather my fault for thinking so much about it."

Mrs. Howard said no more, but she laid those things to heart, and they made her very careful and watchful.

Willie continuing, to all appearance, well, they went, as usual, on the following Sabbath to the house of God. Many a time during the service did the mother's glance, if not her thoughts, wander to the now pale, now flushed countenance of her child. While He who seeth the human heart and knoweth its weakness, remembering that we are but dust, forgave and pitied her.

It was a pleasant walk home through the green quiet fields. The elder children of the family spoke of what they had heard, not lightly, or critically, but with due reverence, as they

had been taught to speak of the ministers of Christ.

"What is the matter with 'Our Willie'?" asked one, at length observing his unusual silence.

"Do you feel ill, my child?" said his mother, anxiously.

"No, mamma," replied Willie. "Only I am not in the humour to talk to-day."

"You are not out of humour, I hope?" observed his little sister, archly.

"Only with myself, Bella."

"Then you will soon be friends again. I always am."

"Too soon, sometimes," said her mother, gently.

Isabel laughed and coloured, and no more was said about it. A day or two afterwards, Mrs. Howard asked Willie whether he had forgotten that she had something of his.

"No, I have not forgotten it," replied he; "you mean the waggon. I would rather that you kept it a little longer, if you please; I have not deserved it yet."

"You appeared to me to be less restless than usual in church on Sunday."

"Yes, mamma ; *but God sees the heart.*"

"Are you growing tired of your little waggon?" asked Isabel, who had stood by unnoticed.

"No indeed, sister. It is my favourite plaything."

"And mine too. We might have had such a nice game to-day with the mown grass ; and it would have been light to draw."

"You must wait until next week, Bella."

"But there will be no grass then."

"Should you like your waggon, Willie?" asked his mother. "You know it rests with yourself."

"If it is only for one hour," pleaded Isabel.

"No, Isabel, dear. No, thank you, mamma. I must not break my word."

"Right, my boy," said Mrs. Howard. But his little sister looked vexed, and her disappointment was an additional motive for Willie to endeavour to control his wandering thoughts, which, with God's help, he eventually succeeded in doing. It was a lesson to him as long as he lived.

There is nothing that parents and children should strive and pray more earnestly against, than those wandering thoughts, which like a flight of birds in a corn-field, steal away the good seed out of the heart ; and render it barren and unfruitful.

How happy Willie felt and looked, when he came to his mother, with his little smiling face, to ask for the waggon. And how happy she was to give it to him, and to think of all the patience and self-denial which he had evinced. Although there was no mown grass to fill it, the reader may be sure that Willie and Isabel enjoyed themselves very much that day.

“Certainly there is nothing like a waggon !” exclaimed the former, as he drew it laughingly along, full of the weeds which he had assisted to gather.

“And then it is so useful,” said Isabel. “Papa says that he does not know what he should have done without us to help him.”

Yes, there is nothing like being useful, and cheerful ; and having a conscience at peace with itself, and with God.

Chapter Third.

"Should he grow to riper years, God grant his heart may prove,

As much at home for heavenly grace, as now for earthly love;
And if beside his grave the tears our aching eyes may dim,
God comfort us for all the love that we shall lose in him."

DELTA.

"I DO NOT think 'our Willie' is well," said Mrs. Howard, one day to her husband.

"He appeared to be well enough this morning, when he and Isabel were romping together in the garden. Of what does he complain?"

"He does not complain, but is looking thin and pale, and soon gets tired."

"He was never very strong," replied Mr. Howard; "and then he grows so fast. I do not think that you need be at all uneasy about the boy; he will be better by-and-bye."

"God grant it!" exclaimed the mother earnestly.

"Amen, my love. And now it is time that you were ready for our drive. The carriage will be at the door in half an hour."

"I wish we were not going, Henry."

Her husband looked surprised.

"You will think me very foolish; but there is a weight upon my heart, a presentiment of evil which I cannot shake off. I would give anything not to be obliged to leave home to-day."

"I not only think you foolish, but wrong. Where is your faith? This is very unlike you."

"Yes, I know—I know it is wrong."

"We shall not be late, and my brother would be so disappointed if we do not go. He is to rejoin his ship to-morrow, and we may not meet again for years."

"It would be unkind to stay away," said Mrs. Howard, "and, as you say, we need not be late. I will go directly and put on my bonnet, that I may not keep you waiting."

The carriage drove up just as Mrs. Howard had finished dressing. The children had assembled in the hall to see them depart ; and to send all sorts of kind messages to dear uncle Tom, who was a great favourite.

Mrs. Howard kissed them each.

"Take care of yourselves," said she.

"One would think that mamma was going a long journey!" exclaimed one of the elder girls, laughingly.

"Do you remember those beautiful lines we were reading the other day," asked her sister, with sudden gravity—

"Who knows when he, to go from home,
Departeth from the door,
Or when, or how, he back shall come;
Or whether never more?"

"Yes; but I would rather not remember them just now," was the reply, as she sprang eagerly forward to return her mother's embrace.

"Take care of Willie," repeated Mrs. Howard.

"Never fear, mamma!" exclaimed little Isabel.
"I will take care of him."

They all laughed, and the carriage drove off.

Mrs. Howard bent forward to catch a last glimpse of her pleasant home, with the group of merry children assembled on the lawn; and having commended them to the care of their Heavenly Father, turned again to her husband, fully determined to cast no shadow upon the enjoyment of the day.

The young midshipman was delighted to see them; and they were all very happy together; he being too full of bright hopes and anticipations to think much of the approaching separation from all he loved. On the eve of departure he already spoke of his return, loaded with honour and distinction—if it should be God's will. "If not," said he, and the tear glittered for a moment in the eye of the young sailor—"if not, God's will be done. You will all know that I am safe—safe in Jesus."

Mrs. Howard forgot her misgivings, and was in no hurry to be the first to break up a family circle that might never meet again on earth. It was late when they set forth at length upon their return; and although fine and moonlight, the air felt cold and chill. Mrs. Howard drew

her cloak around her, and wished herself at home ; but they had many a long mile yet to go. Both were silent. Mr. Howard was sorry to part from his brother ; while his wife did not altogether regret his departure. The miniature frigates which he had made for the children, together with the sea stories—"yarns" he called them—which he was so fond of relating to them, having already made a strange impression upon their young minds, so that even little Willie thought that he should like to be a sailor. Mr. Howard was the first to break the silence, by remarking a singular appearance in the heavens.

"It looks like a fire," said he.

"It is a fire!" exclaimed Mrs. Howard.
"Where can it be?"

There was no reply ; but her husband quickened his pace. As they drove rapidly on, it became every moment more and more distinct, while the whole sky assumed a red and lurid hue.

"Surely," said Mrs. Howard, in a low and trembling voice, "surely it is in the direction of our home."

"It is," replied he, in the same tone.

Mrs. Howard folded her hands together, and prayed as we only pray at such times as these.

On they drove, faster and faster. They could see the crimson flames darting upward like tongues of fire; and even distinguish, after a time, the distant hum of many voices. As they dashed onwards they overtook and recognized several familiar faces of friends and neighbours, hastening to the scene of action; but they asked no questions: there was no longer a doubt of the terrible calamity that had fallen upon them. As they drove up before the burning edifice, some one said: "Thank God, the master and mistress have returned!"

"My children!" exclaimed Mrs. Howard, holding out her arms imploringly. "Where are my children?" And then, the voice of the little Isabel was heard calling, "Mamma, mamma!" The child had only her night-dress on, and sobbed bitterly with cold and fear. Mrs. Howard folded her in her warm cloak, and held her tightly pressed to her bosom; while the rest of the children gathered round her, pale and shiver-

ing, and enveloped in such wrappings as could be procured at the moment.

"Are all safe?" exclaimed Mr. Howard; "where are Charley and Willie?"

At that moment the voice of his eldest son fell upon his ears, as he struggled with those who held him back.

"Let me go!" said he; "let me go, I say. He must not—he shall not perish thus!"

It appeared that in the confusion poor Willie, in his little inner chamber, had been forgotten, and was only remembered now that there appeared no hope of saving him.

"Charley," said Mr. Howard; and the boy grew still at the sound of his father's voice, "look to your mother. I will take care of Willie."

No one ventured to detain him, although many a warning voice was raised.

"It is too late," said they. "He will never reach him; and even if he does, by this time the child must be suffocated."

Mr. Howard had only time to breathe a hurried prayer as he rushed up the burning staircase and along the passages, calling upon

Willie as he went; while through the crackling of the fire, and the noise of falling rafters, a child's voice replied, "Here I am, papa—dear papa!" Mr. Howard felt sick and giddy, and almost suffocated; but the voice seemed to put new life into him. He opened the door of the little chamber, and the fire rushed in with him. Those below saw that it was so, and gave them up for lost. There was no ladder long enough to reach the window, and the man who had gone for one was not yet returned. For a moment Mr. Howard appeared to contemplate the possibility of leaping out with the child in his arms, and then drew back again, and disappeared—fell back, perhaps, suffocated with the smoke. His wife and children—the mother, and brothers, and sisters of the precious little one whom he held, looking on, powerless to aid. But Mr. Howard had not fainted,

"Don't be afraid, papa," whispered Willie, clinging about his neck. "Remember the three men in the burning fiery furnace; I cannot think of their names now, but you know whom I mean. Not a hair of our head will be touched, unless it God's will."

Mr. Howard smiled—yes, actually smiled amid that fearful scene, as the child spoke. It was a beautiful smile, full of hope, and courage, and resignation. He rolled Willie up in one of his little blankets, and, taking him in his arms, passed out by the way he had come, uninjured. They had scarcely cleared the staircase when it fell in with a terrible crash, followed by a wild shriek from those without.

Mrs. Howard buried her face in her hands. She no longer prayed. She was *trying* to say, “Thy will be done.” Look up, Christian mother, thy husband and child are safe? What, still incredulous—still pale and shuddering? Lift up thy bowed head. It is “our Willie!” Unfold the warm blanket. Look at his little, smiling face—smiling to allay your fears on his account. Not a hair of his head is touched. You were right when you told him that God would take care of him. He has taken care of him. He gives you back your child!

Chapter Forty.

" ' What art thou thinking of ?' said the mother,
 ' What art thou thinking of, my child ?'

' I was thinking of heaven,' he answered her,
 And looked up in her face, and smiled."

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.

SURROUNDED by his wife and children, Mr. Howard could look upon the destruction of his property, not only without regret, but with a deep feeling of thankfulness for the preservation of these dear ones. It would only be to work a little harder, and a few years later, than he had intended. He blessed God that he was able to do it ; and that he had them still to work for. He acknowledged an over-ruling Providence in all that had befallen him. If they had been only a few minutes later, both his sons must, in

all human probability, have perished. His brave Charley, with his lion heart and slender frame; and "Our Willie," the little pet lamb of the household. Well might Mr. Howard thank God.

It was never known, with certainty, in what way the fire originated. In all probability through the carelessness of some of the domestics; and that in the confusion that ensued, no proper steps were taken to subdue it, until it had attained such a height, that they had barely time to escape with their lives. Mrs. Howard found a temporary asylum in the hospitable mansion of the good minister; while several of the neighbours kindly offered to take charge of the elder children.

It was a happy day when the scattered members of the family group were once more re-united in a new home. The children gradually resumed their accustomed occupations and pursuits, and began to forget the excitement of the past—all but Willie. His little chamber was still near that of his parents, and they often heard him, startled out of his quiet sleep by the

haunting dream of fire, calling out, as he had done on that eventful night: "Here I am, papa! dear, dear papa!" And yet, he had not felt frightened, he said—that is, not very frightened; but had tried to remember all his mother had told him, about putting his whole trust in God; and the recollection comforted him.

"There was a terrible noise," said he, "all the time I was praying; but I knew that the Lord Jesus could hear every word. I asked Him first of all, to take care of my brothers and sisters, and papa and mamma, and to send them home soon. And when I heard the fire crackling without, I begged Him not to let the flames touch me. The room was quite light, and so hot. I longed for a glass of water. Presently it came into my head all of a sudden, that they had forgotten me. And I thought of you, mamma, and of your grief. I knew that *you* would not have forgotten me. And that the first thing when you came back, you would ask, 'Where is our Willie?' But I did not know what the answer might be. I could only lie still and pray, 'Dear Lord Jesus! do not take

me away yet. Do not let me be burned to death up here all alone. Suffer me to see mamma once more. If I must die, let it be in her arms. I cannot die without seeing mamma!' I had just added, 'Thy will be done,' when I heard a voice that I knew at once to be papa's, changed as it was, calling out, 'Willie! Willie!' Oh, how glad I was to hear it, for I knew then that God had heard me."

Such was the child's account of that terrible night.

Mrs. Howard resumed her evening visits to the bedsides of her children. How much they had to tell her! What a rich reward for all her care and watchfulness did she now experience in the hour of trial! The good seed had ripened into an abundant harvest! It was touching to see their affectionate sympathy, their ready self-sacrifice, and the cheerfulness with which they proposed to give up any little indulgence to which they might have been accustomed. Charley offered to put off going to college for another year, and assist his father in the duties of the counting-house. While the eldest daughter,

Julia, requested permission to undertake the education of her younger brothers and sisters, and thus save the expense of a governess. Even the little Isabel was anxious to do something. And Willie wished that he were a man, in order that he might work for dear papa and mamma. There were tears in his mother's eyes when he said this. She was wondering whether he would ever live to be a man.

Willie was much altered, some said, since the night of the fire ; but Mrs. Howard had noticed the alteration before, although there is little doubt but that the consequent excitement and exposure to the night air had increased these unfavourable symptoms. He did not complain ; but he lost his appetite, and grew weak and languid, seldom caring to move from his mother's side.

"Mamma," said he, one day as they sat together thus, Mrs. Howard at needle-work, and Willie holding a book in his hand, but not reading. He had complained of head-ache, and his hot brow rested against her knee. "Mamma, do you love me ?"

"What a question, my child!"

"Yes, I know you do. But you must not love me too much. It will seem so hard else."

"What will seem hard, Willie?"

"To give me up when God sends for me."

"But I hope that it will please God to spare you for many long years to come."

"Yes, mamma, I hope so too."

"His will be done," murmured Mrs. Howard, gently.

"Mamma," whispered the child, clinging to her, "I like to hear you say that."

The following day Mrs. Howard, with the consent of her husband, took Willie to an eminent physician, whose opinion confirmed at once her worst fears. From that hour a gloom fell upon the little household. The loss of worldly property had been cheerfully endured, but how could they bear to think of losing Willie? Isabel was the last to comprehend the threatened calamity. One day, however, she came to her mother with a troubled countenance:

"Mamma," exclaimed she, "what does nurse mean by saying that she does not think 'our

Willie's long for this world? I heard her this very morning; but she did not know I was so near."

"She meant, my child, that our Willie will soon be God's Willie."

Isabel flung herself into her mother's arms, and hid her pale face in her bosom.

"I know what you mean," said she, in a whisper; "he will die."

"I fear so, Isabel."

"Oh, mamma, and I was so unkind, so wicked, as to laugh at him for being too weak and ill to run about as well as I could."

"But you have not done so lately."

"Not since you told me how wrong it was. But I cannot forget all that I used to say. I wonder whether Willie recollects it as well as I do—I wonder whether God recollects it."

"The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin," whispered her mother, soothingly; and the child's wild grief was stilled.

"Mamma," said she, after a long pause, "God is so good, so merciful, let us ask Him to spare our Willie—shall we? And you shall see how kind I will be to him in future, and what care

I will take of him, and how I will watch and wait upon him. Somehow I do think that Willie will get better."

Mrs. Howard shook her head.

"God can make him better; can he not, mamma?"

"Yes; nothing is impossible to Him."

"Then let us ask Him. Oh, mamma, he is so good. He will leave us Willie."

A sudden hope filled the mother's heart as she knelt down and prayed. "Who can tell," thought she, "whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live? He doth not willingly afflict. Nothing is impossible to Him. Oh, Lord, if it be Thy will, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not my will, but Thine, be done."

Chapter Fifth.

"He died; but that fond mother
Her sorrow did restrain,
For she knew he was with Jesus,
And she asked him not again."

MARY HOWITT.

We have frequently thought when we saw—
alas! that it should be a common sight—sisters
and brothers tyrannising over and ridiculing
those younger and weaker than themselves, how
sorry they will be for this if it should please
God to take these little ones to himself. The
strong, healthy child does not remember that
health and strength are God's gifts, and may be
withdrawn any moment in their lives. We have
seen the light step and the laughing countenance
turned back mockingly upon those too weak to
follow in the gladsome race, and wondered, if
that child were to fall, and perhaps only sprain

her uncle, how she would feel if any one were to laugh at her. How thankful she would be for the kind supporting arm, and the gentle voice.

If any of our youthful readers have ever acted thus, and their brothers and sisters, or it may be their playmates, are still with them, let them thank God, and resolve, in His strength, to do so no more. But if a little grave in the church yard be all that is left of those poor afflicted ones, who, too weak to share your sports, became the objects of your ridicule; then lose not a moment in fleeing to that Saviour whose atoning merits can alone cleanse you from so great a sin.

Although it had happened so long ago, Isabel could not forget her former conduct to her brother, and now sought to make amends for it by every means in her power. Never was there such a devoted little nurse. Mrs. Howard was frequently obliged to send her away, lest the confinement should injure her health; for Willie was too weak now to leave his chamber.

Sometimes his father carried him in his arms to the usual sitting room, where he would lie up-

on the sofa, wrapped up in shawls. But the voices of his brothers and sisters were almost too much for him. Even Isabel wearied him. It was quiet that he wanted—perfect quiet—with only his mother near him. He was often too weak even to speak; but he had ever a smile for her. He did not appear to suffer much; but was evidently fading away.

Mrs. Howard could no longer deceive herself with hopes of his recovery. She ceased to struggle against the will of God. She knew that her little lamb would be safe in the fold of the Good Shepherd—safer than all her tender love and care could ever make him here. She could give him up, and say in her heart, “It is well,” and yet it was but a loving mother’s heart after all, that agonized, and yearned, and felt half broken, even while it submitted.

“Mamma,” said Willie one day, as she sat by his bedside; “see what Isabel has brought me. I wanted to live till the ‘look-ups,’ came again.” Willie always called the daisy, “look up,” in remembrance of a little book he had once read,*

* “Look up; or, Girls and Flowers.”

and now he held a tiny bunch of them in his wasted hand. "It is my favourite flower; and brings such happy thoughts."

"It is a happy thing," said Mrs. Howard, "to be able to look up to God as our merciful Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ; and to feel sure that we are His children."

"Yes, mamma, that is what I mean. It does not matter how soon we are gathered then."

"Or what storms of affliction may beat upon us," continued Mrs. Howard, following out the idea, "and bow down our weary heads, even to the very ground."

"But we must not let them bow down our heads. We must look up. Do not forget that, please."

"I will not, dear child."

"How pleasant it is to be in the fields and meadows in the spring," said Willie, still contemplating his daisies. "Are there any buttercups yet, I wonder. How happy we used to be gathering them—Isabel and I. Mamma, I am very young to die."

"You are, you are, my precious one!"

"Hush! do not weep," said the child, putting his little arms round her neck. "It was wrong of me to say so. I had forgotten that night; the night of the fire, when I begged the Lord Jesus not to let me be burnt to death; and only asked to see you once again, and to die in your arms. And He heard me. He always hears me. We ought to be very thankful."

"I am thankful, my child."

"And now, mamma, take the 'look-ups' and put them in a little water, please. I do not want to look at or think of them again; only, only, I cannot help thinking that the next you see may be on the grave of your little Willie. But you must not grieve for me. I shall not be there. I shall be with Jesus. Promise me, mamma, that you will not grieve."

"Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus," replied Mrs. Howard. "It is natural to grieve."

"But not overmuch."

"Not as one without hope, my child. I promise you that. I shall know that my tears cannot bring you back, and that, although you may not return to us, we may come to you."

"Yes; every one," said Willie, looking round upon the little group who had come in to wish him good night, and now gathered silently about the bed. "You must all come. You all know the way."

"Yes, my boy," said his father. "There is but one way—Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. And now you must not speak any more."

Willie leaned back, and closed his eyes with a smile. Softly, one by one, his brothers and sisters drew near and kissed his pale cheek. Even Isabel ventured to do no more. And again the mother and her son were left together. The latter was about to speak, but Mrs. Howard laid her finger upon her lips.

"Try and sleep, darling," said she. "You have talked too much already."

"I only wanted to tell you that I am so happy—so very happy. Dear Lord Jesus!"

Mrs. Howard passed her hand gently over his heavy eyes, which closed beneath her touch, and in a few moments he was asleep. She little thought then, how soon she should have to close

those dear eyes in reality, and watch over him sleeping the sleep of death.

The following day the child appeared to be much better, and asked his brother Charley, with a smile, to make his will for him.

"Or stay," said he, "Henry is to be a lawyer, and lawyers make wills, do they not?"

"What is it you want to leave, Willie, dear?"

"A great many things; but you must write them down, please, lest you should forget."

"There is no fear of my forgetting," said his brother Henry, while he fetched a sheet of paper at the same time, in order to please him.

"Are you quite ready?"

"Yes, quite."

"First of all, then, there is my little Bible. Mamma must have that. The rest of the books are too childish for any one but Isabel. Perhaps you would like the microscope—should you?"

Henry's tears blinded him so that he could no longer see to write, or even speak without difficulty.

"Yes, I will keep it for you," answered he at length, "until you are well enough to use it."

" You must keep it for my sake, for I shall never be well again. I thought you knew that. But never mind; let us go on. I should like to leave Julia my silver pencil-case. And Mary and Caroline can divide the cabinet of shells between them. I do not think I have anything good enough for Charlie—but he will not forget me. And now about the money. I have just fifteen and sixpence. Did you think that I had been so rich?"

Henry shook his head.

" Well, I should like to give five shillings to, the Bible Society; there is nothing like the Bible, you know. And five shillings to the missionaries. I thought once that I might live to be a missionary, and go out in uncle Tom's ship—but that is all over now. The other five shillings must be for the poor ragged children, who have no one to teach or care for them. Three times five are fifteen; and the sixpence can go towards paying the lawyer! Lawyers expect to be paid for making wills, don't they, Henry?" added he, with an arch smile.

" Yes, I believe so."

"I do think you are crying," said Willie, in a changed tone.

"Oh Willie! how can I help it? How can we bear to part with you?"

"By thinking how happy I shall be. And yet I should like to have remained with you all—and mamma—oh, mamma will miss me the most, dear, dear mamma." And his own tears fell fast. "Hark!" added he, a moment afterwards.

"That is her step. She must not see that we have been crying; it would only grieve her!" And hastily wiping his own and Henry's eyes with his little handkerchief, he began to smile, as he always did at her approach. How long did the memory of that loving smile live in his mother's heart!

Willie continued all day to be apparently better. And when night came, and Mrs. Howard had read and prayed with him as usual, and then, drawing the curtains of his little bed, sat down in silence by its side—she never left him now—the child asked her to come and kiss him once again, saying that he could not go to sleep until she had. His mother, subduing her

feelings, obeyed him gently and calmly. And then Willie smiled, and laid himself back on the pillow, still holding her hand. Mrs. Howard fancied that his voice sounded strangely. As she stood watching him in the moonlight, a change passed over his pale face. His lips moved, and whispered as she bent towards him, "Mamma—mamma—so happy!—dear Lord Jesus!" And so he died.

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. Blessed is the memory that they leave behind them. Blessed, even amid their weeping, are the parents and relatives of these dear little ones.

"The mother went her household ways—
Again she knelt in prayer,
And only asked of heaven its aid,
Her heavy lot to bear."

THE YOUNG SCULPTOR.

Chapter First.

" Youth, with pale cheek and slender frame,
And dreams of greatness in thine eye!
Goest thou to built an early name?
Or early in thy tasks to die ?"—W. C. BRYANT.

It was a hot summer day, when two gentlemen, passing through the suburbs of London, paused to contemplate the plaster images of a poor Italian boy, who, overcome with heat and fatigue, had fallen asleep on the door-step where he had placed them. A little girl, neatly dressed, and carrying a bag of school-books in her hand, had also lingered for the same purpose ; and a slight curl of her rosy lip and a toss of her pretty head, showed her to be no favourable critic, although she could not help pitying the poor weary Italian boy.

"It is strange," said one of the gentlemen to his companion, "how little talent our English boys evince for this art. Martelli made the same remark only this morning. All his best pupils, he told me, were foreigners. Some of these figures are really good ; that bust, for instance, next to the Joan of Arc."

"Oh, sir ! I wish you could see our Willie's figures," exclaimed a gentle voice by his side.

"And who is 'our Willie' ?" asked the old gentleman, turning good-naturedly towards the little girl, who coloured deeply, and hung down her head.

"My brother," replied she, after a pause, during which she had somewhat recovered her self-possession. "He can model much better than any of these."

"Can he ? then I should like to see them. Do you live far from here ?"

"No, sir, not above five minutes' walk."

The old gentleman's companion smiled as he wished him good morning. He knew him too well to feel surprised to see him walk away, holding the little girl by the hand.

"Good morning, since you will not accompany us," replied Mr. Vernon, looking back.

"No, thank you ; not to-day."

Before they had reached the place of their destination, Mr. Vernon had gleaned from his young and artless companion, that her mother was a widow, subsisting partly on a small pension—her husband having been in the navy—and partly by the work of her own hands. And very busy, skilful hands they must have been, to paint screens, embroider chairs, make purses, and many other things, for which she found a ready sale.

"You cannot think how hard she works," said Gertrude, for that was the little girl's name; "but in a few years Willie and I hope to be able to work for her."

"Why, what can you do, little one?"

"Not much, at present ; but Willie can do a great deal. Every one thinks that 'our Willie' will be a genius ! I do not know exactly what that means, but something very grand, I am sure."

As she finished speaking, they came to a

small detached house—very small, and poorly furnished, but exceedingly neat and clean. Mrs. Mortimer was surprised to see her daughter accompanied by a stranger, and still more so when Gertrude said, in her little, confident manner,

"Do not be afraid, mamma ; he is a very nice old gentleman. I have brought him to see 'our Willie's' models."

Mrs. Mortimer coloured slightly, and apologized for her little girl in a way that evidently showed she had been accustomed to good society.

"I hope I am not intruding," said Mr. Vernon.

"Not at all. My son will be very happy to show them to you, I am sure : but he is only a beginner."

She pushed open the door of an inner room as she spoke, where a boy in a brown-holland blouse, fastened round the waist by a leathern belt, sat modelling a vase out of clay. He shook back the fair curls from his hot brow as they entered, and fixed his bright, intelligent eyes, with an inquiring gaze, upon his unexpected visitor. Gertrude, as usual, was the

first to speak. "He is come to see your models, Willie," said she. "His name is Vernon, and I like him very much."

The boy could not help smiling ; but he rose immediately, and welcomed Mr. Vernon with genuine politeness, only regretting that they were not better worth seeing. There were several finished and unfinished performances lying about the room. Busts, figures, vases, and one or two incomplete groups, in which the artist had failed to work out his own conception, and yet left enough executed to show what the idea was. Mr. Vernon examined everything long and carefully, while Gertrude watched his countenance with great earnestness.

"I dare say," observed Mr. Vernon, looking up at length, and meeting her eager gaze ; "I dare say, now, that you think your brother's works quite equal to those of Thorwaldsen himself ?"

"I do not know who Thorwaldsen is, sir," replied Gertrude ; "but I think them very beautiful."

"And so do I, my child."

Gertrude clapped her hands for joy.

"Who is your instructor?" asked Mr. Vernon, turning to the young artist; young, indeed, to have already done so much and so well.

"I have no instructor, sir."

"Is it possible!" exclaimed the old gentleman.

"He took to it of his own accord," said Mrs. Mortimer. "It was the same when he was quite a child, if he could only get hold of a piece of clay or putty."

"Why, he is but a child now."

"He looks younger from being little of his age," replied his mother.

"Well, Mr. —— what is your name?" asked the old gentleman, turning to the boy.

"Willie," exclaimed Gertrude, answering for him.

"Well, Willie, you must not think, from what you have heard me say, that your works are already perfect."

"I do not, sir."

"You have a great deal to learn—a very great deal; and to unlearn, which is still more difficult."

"Yes, sir," said the boy, "I often feel as if mine were not the right way of doing things ; but it is the only way I know."

"The fact is," replied Mr. Vernon, "that you have arrived at the end without beginning at the beginning, and will have to go back and commence afresh. It will be tedious work, but you must do it, my lad, if you ever hope to achieve anything great and good."

"I do not mind its being tedious," said Willie, "or how hard I work ; but who is to teach me !"

"Leave that to me," replied Mr. Vernon. "You have heard, perhaps, of Martelli, the sculptor; he lives near you."

"Oh yes, sir, I know the place very well ; and have often looked through the window into the long gallery, and wished that I dared venture inside. That figure of the sleeping child was copied from one of which I thus daily caught a glimpse."

"Can you lend it to me for a short time. I should like to show it to Martelli. I am going to ask him if he will have you for a pupil."

"But the premium, sir. Mamma has frequently wished to place me with him, but he asks so much. Not too much, but more than she can afford to give."

"I will settle about the premium, and you shall repay me afterwards, when you are rich. But you need not thank me yet, until I know whether there is a vacancy—whether Martelli will take you. He is not very partial to English boys in general." And the benevolent old man broke from them and went away, holding the image in his hand.

When he was gone, Willie sat down, pale and trembling.

"Oh, mamma," exclaimed he, "what happiness!"

"Let us thank God for it, my son, from whom cometh all good things."

"Yes, yes, let us thank God." And the boy felt relieved in pouring out his grateful heart in prayer and thanksgiving.

"Who knows," exclaimed he, after a pause, "but that I may be a great sculptor, after all."

"We must pray that, in such a case, you may be kept humble, my child."

"Yes, mamma."

"What a good thing it was," said Gertrude, "that I thought of asking him to come here."

"You did not think of it, my child. If you had thought, you would have been afraid to address an utter stranger."

"It must have been an impulse," said Willie.

"It was God, my children, who put it into her heart to speak thus, and inclined that of Mr. Vernon to listen and act in the generous manner he has done. Of ourselves we can do nothing. But you must not be too sanguine, Willie, lest you should be disappointed, after all."

"I am not afraid," answered Willie; "he only said that in order to stop our thanks."

"Nor I," said Gertrude. "I took a fancy to him from the first. What a benevolent-looking head he has. Don't you think you could model it, Willie?"

"Yes, I am sure that I could. Somehow, I feel that I could do anything just at this moment."

"Do you think you could manage to eat any

dinner?" asked Mrs. Mortimer, with a smile.
"It has been waiting this long time."

"Oh, mamma, dinner!" And in truth none of them could swallow above a few mouthfuls; they were all too happy. Joy sometimes takes away the appetite quite as much as sorrow.

When it was over, Mrs. Mortimer resumed her embroidery, but her hands trembled, and her eyes frequently wandered towards the window at which the brother and sister had stationed themselves to await the return of their new friend. "What if he should not come," thought she; while the children, impatient, but never doubting, beguiled the time by talking hopefully together of a bright future which might never be.

Chapter Second.

“The darkest day,
Live till to-morrow, will have passed away.”—COWPER.

MR. VERNON entered the studio of the sculptor Martelli, with the figure of the sleeping child still in his hand; and holding it up before him, asked if he could tell him whose work it was.

“Yes, it is mine. It has been standing in the gallery for some time. I wonder you never noticed it before.”

“Look again,” said the old gentleman, with a smile.

Upon examining it more closely, the artist saw that the material of which it was made was different; but at the same time he generously confessed that the workmanship was, in most parts, quite equal to his own.

“I did not think that any of the boys had

been so clever," said he. "It must have been Stefano Villani."

"No; it is done by a young English lad, whom I want to place with you as a pupil."

"English!" repeated Martelli, shrugging his shoulders.

"And yet you praised the workmanship but now."

"It is admirable. But where could he have seen mine? for this is evidently a copy, and the few slight differences are decided improvements."

"It was done from memory; and studied through the dim windows of the gallery, into which he longed, but dared not venture, to penetrate."

"Why not; I should have been glad to have shown it to him, or anything else."

"I know you would," said Mr. Vernon. "But my young friend could not tell that. And now you will not, I hope, object to receive him as a pupil?"

"I would receive any one recommended by my benefactor. But a boy like this carries his

own recommendation. And English too. I can scarcely believe it."

"When will it be convenient for him to come?" inquired the old gentleman. "He lives close by, and had better continue, for the present at least, to reside with his mother."

"As you please," said Martelli. "Let him come to-morrow morning. But what is his name?"

"Mortimer—William Mortimer."

"Good. I shall be glad to see him."

Martelli returned to his workshop, while the old gentleman retraced his steps to the little dwelling where he was so anxiously expected. The children clapped their hands when they saw him coming; and Mrs. Mortimer thanked God. We will not attempt to describe the interview, or the deep gratitude of that happy family. Verily Mr. Vernon had his reward.

The next day Willie went to the sculptor's. He was dressed in a clean holland blouse, with a linen collar, white as snow, turned back from his throat and fastened with a black ribbon. His fair hair, carefully smoothed by a mother's

hand, hung in short, clustering curls. A mother's anxious glance followed him as he went out into the world for the first time: and a mother's heart besought God's blessing on her boy.

The pupils were prepared for his arrival. Martelli had already spoken of his genius; and bade Stefano Villani look to his laurels. But at sight of his childish appearance they all burst into a rude laugh.

"Who curled your hair, little one?" asked a boy, giving it a violent pull as he spoke.

"No one," replied Willie, jerking away his head. "It curls naturally."

"Oh indeed! Why what a girl it is! Look at his fine collar!"

"And his smart blouse!" exclaimed another. "Here, you Louis, dust a chair for Miss Mortimer!"

"Leave him alone, can't you," said Stefano. "Here, child, set to work and let us see what you can do. I have sketched the design." And he placed before him a rough drawing of an infant's coral and bells.

"Would not a fool's cap and bells do as well?" asked one of the boys. "At any rate, it would be easier."

"I do not know that," said Willie, who, young as he was, had a brave and dauntless spirit. "I have heard say that it takes a wise man to be a fool. But stand out of the way all of you, or I can do nothing."

The boys looked at one another, and drew back, watching him eagerly as he began to model the sketch of the coral and bells, with great quickness and delicacy of touch.

"He will do," said one.

"Look how his hands tremble," exclaimed another.

"Yes," said Willie, looking up, with the tears, in spite of his efforts to restrain them, glittering in his large dark eyes, "because to-day is the first time I ever left home; and unkindness is strange to me. But I suppose I shall get accustomed to it."

"He is crying," said one of the boys.

"He is mother-sick!" exclaimed another.

But several young hearts were touched; and

they gathered around the stranger with friendly and pitying glances.

"Martelli was right," thought Stefano. "Child as he appeared to be, I must look to my laurels—and I will. It shall never be said that a young self-taught English boy, was more than a match for a Villani."

"Hark!" exclaimed one of the boys, at length. "The master is coming! Here—quick—put away that nonsense." And he tore up Stefano's sketch, and held out his hand for the model.

"Why should I put it away?" asked Willie. "I want to finish it first."

"You would not have it tell tales, would you?" inquired one of his new friends.

"No; certainly not."

"Then give it to me;" and he threw it hastily under the seat. "The master bid us all be kind to you; and so we will in future—at least I will?"

"And I," "And I," exclaimed several voices. While the brow of Stefano Villani grew dark and threatening.

"Thank you. Thank you," replied Willie.

"I need not introduce you, I see," said Martelli to his new pupil, as he looked on the animated countenances around him. "I hope you will all be good friends. It pains me when it is otherwise. And now, Mortimer, you must come with me for a little while, until I find out what you are fit for."

"The best work, doubtless," muttered Stefano to himself, as they went away. "But we shall see."

The sculptor took Willie into the dim old gallery where he had often longed to be. It was crowded with pale marble figures, and studies from the best masters. A little world of beauty, showing what the gifted have done and may accomplish, by persevering industry. Willie felt awe-stricken, and spoke in whispers. His enthusiasm, when the feeling wore off, delighted the artist. He was pleased, perhaps, that he should single out, unknowingly, several of his own works as especial objects of admiration. Such little things do please us in spite of ourselves. Anyhow, he took quite a fancy to the boy, encouraged him, and wondered to listen to

his intelligent observations. But he soon discovered, that the youth who could criticise and even suggest improvements in the higher branches of art, was utterly unable to draw a leg or an arm correctly; and must consent to go back, as Mr. Vernon had said, and begin at the beginning.

Much to Stefano's delight, Willie was accordingly placed in the lowest class of all; and quietly and diligently set to work to study the first rudiments of his glorious art.

"I did think," observed one of the students, "that Mortimer was clever. How exquisitely he began to model the coral and bells. But the master knows best."

"To be sure he does," replied Stefano, scornfully. "My laurels are safe enough, I think, for the present at least."

Willie soon found out that in many things the youngest boy in the school knew more than he did. But this did not mortify him. "I was never taught," thought he, "and they were. What I do know, as my dear mother says, is God's gift; and it is He who has afforded me

this opportunity for improvement. If I live, they shall not be able to laugh at me very long."

Even the way he held his tools was wrong. And yet those who ridiculed him, holding them in the right way, failed to produce the same effect. Willie took pains to correct himself. He was never angry at being told of his faults or awkwardness; or out of temper at their ridicule. Sometimes he even thanked them for telling him what was amiss; while the boys felt touched by his forbearance, and sorry for having tried to vex him. So true it is that "a soft answer turneth away wrath."

Mr. Vernon marked his progress with a watchful eye, and frequently spoke of him to the sculptor. Many years before, while traveling in Italy, where they first became acquainted, he had saved Martelli's life in a storm, when the boat upset, by swimming to the shore with him. And afterwards, when the sculptor came to settle in England, had many opportunities of introducing him to that patronage which his own talents eventually secured. The conse-

quence of all this was a more than common friendship, cemented by gratitude and affection, which made Martelli doubly anxious to please his benefactor by showing every attention to Willie; although he soon began to love the boy for his own sake.

Chapter Third.

“Through the long, busy day,
Even in the hours which must to toil be given,
How many a thought may wing its way to heaven.”

KEBLE.

WILLIE never told his mother about any of the little annoyances which he had to endure. “She has trouble enough,” thought he, “without that.” But after a time, he asked her to let him have his hair cut, as none of the other boys had curls ; besides which, it made him feel hot. Mrs. Mortimer thought that he was right ; and immediately set to work and cut off those bright curls with her own hand. When she had done so, she did not throw them away, but placed them carefully aside in a drawer.

“It seems a pity,” observed Gertrude.
“Why, what does it signify? I feel as light again now.”

"I believe it will be better," said his mother.
"After all, boys do not wear curls; only I liked to see them."

"Did you? If I had known that, I would not have had them cut off. But they will soon grow again; and, then, I do not mean to care what any one says."

"Have the boys been laughing at your curls, Willie?" said Gertrude, with a saucy smile.

"Never mind, sister."

"It is no great matter, indeed," replied his mother. "Nevertheless, if it be so, you have done wisely in having the cause of contention removed."

The boy was satisfied with her approval; and also to find that he really did feel much cooler without them.

It was a fortunate arrangement for Willie, that he should continue to reside with his mother. A thousand sweet home influences went with him into the new world he was just entering, and helped to preserve him from its many snares and temptations. The memory of the morning text mingled with the busy hum of the studio. The quiet hour of evening prayer served to recall all

that he had done amiss during the day that was past, and invited him to the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world. His young heart, wounded at first by the taunts and unkindness of his new companions, was comforted by thinking upon the love that awaited his return. It prevented him also from making an idol of his art, as many youthful students do, and so becoming selfish, abstracted, and useless members of society, save in that one particular science to which they have devoted themselves: praised, perhaps, for their genius, but unloved and unmissed when it shall please God to call them hence.

It kept him, likewise, from working too hard, and so injuring his own health. Let Mrs. Mortimer be never so busy, she managed to find time for a long evening walk, when the weather permitted. Sometimes they went a little way into the country; far enough, at any rate, to gather flowers and blackberries, and smell the pleasant hay-fields: cheap and healthful luxuries to the dwellers in cities; and especially so to our young student, after the heat and excite-

ment of the workshop. It was good for him to be there. It was good for him to run races with the lively Gertrude, until they were out of breath; to chase the white butterflies, or large grey moths—but never to hurt them; to imitate the notes of birds; and laugh at little things, until the air rang with the pleasant sound.

How many a young and gifted one would be with us now, if they could only have been persuaded occasionally to relax thus. The mind requires refreshment as well as the body; more especially in youth. Without it both must faint and fail.

Mrs. Mortimer, as we have before intimated, was in every respect fitted to be the friend and adviser, as well as the companion and playmate, of her children. Willie could talk to her of his art, and feel that she understood, and was even capable of directing him. If she had hitherto only painted screens, it was because they found the readiest sale, and she had to work for their daily bread. Whatever dreams she might have had of one day aspiring to something higher, they ceased as soon as her son's peculiar talent

began to develop itself ; and she was deeply anxious to afford him the means of improvement, which could only be done by increased and untiring exertion on her part. At the time when Mr. Vernon so generously offered to place Willie with the sculptor, Martelli, she had already ten bright sovereigns laid by towards that very purpose. But the old man refused to take them, telling her to keep them for the boy until he should want them.

When his young companions said that Willie was home-sick, or called him, "Mother's darling !" the flush upon his pale cheek was one of pride, not shame. It is a blessed thing to have a home, and a wise and loving mother, such as her of whom we write.

Although Martelli was very careful not to show it, Willie was, beyond doubt, his favourite pupil. His heart had warmed towards the lad from the first, when he singled out his performances in the old, dim gallery, from among a hundred others, as especial objects of his childish enthusiasm. The recommendation and friendship of his benefactor had also its due weight ; while the boy's

own genius excited the wonder and admiration of the generous artist.

It chanced, too—or rather it was the will of God—that, when Willie had been there about a twelvemonth, Martelli fell ill. It was a slow, lingering illness, which took him long to shake off again, and confined him for many weeks to his couch. Dreary weeks would these have been but for Willie, for the sculptor had neither kith nor kin to care for him. Every day—for it was in the summer time—the boy brought him fresh wild flowers, with the dew still upon them ; and described the bright, sunny nooks, where he had gathered them. Martelli had never heard of such places, although he had been in the neighbourhood so long. They talked of England, and Italy—glorious Italy ! as the sick man called it, while the colour rose into his pale, sallow face—with her blue skies, and golden sunsets, and wonders of nature and art. But sometimes Martelli was too weary to talk, and then Willie read to him out of the little Bible his mother had given him.

To confess the truth, the sculptor would a

great deal rather have had him read anything else. He thought the Bible a dull book enough for a sick room. But he knew that the boy meant it kindly ; and was too good-natured to hurt his feelings by saying so, or asking for anything else. Gradually, however, he became interested in the beautiful Scripture narratives which the Bible contains, and above all, with that exquisitely simple and beautiful narrative of His life, who came down from His bright home in heaven to die for us miserable and guilty sinners.

Wonderful love ! Wonderful compassion ! Wonderful story ! Well might he weep and tremble while he listened to it. Happy child, who, looking up to God as his reconciled Father in Jesus Christ, could say, " And all this for me." Martelli could not say this. He did not understand it ; but he began to wish to do so, and that was a great point gained. How often in illness does God seem to call us apart, as it were, from the world, in order to speak comfortably to us, through the means of good books, or Christian friends. How many have had

cause to say, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted ; that I might learn Thy statutes."*

Martelli recovered ; and the Bible—alas ! that it should be so—was again neglected ; but it was never again forgotten. Its voice haunted him in studio and workshop ; and in many respects he was an altered man.

* Psalm cxix. 71.

Chapter Forty.

“Teach me to submit
Unto all earthly sorrows cheerfully,
Knowing that none shall be
But what Thy holy wisdom seeth fit.”

MARGARET PINCHARD.

STEFANO VILLANI and Willie Mortimer felt that they were rivals; although the one was too proud, and the other too generous, to show it, and more especially when the sculptor one day announced that Mr. Vernon had offered a handsome prize to be contended for among the pupils, and bestowed upon that one whose original and unassisted performance should be considered by competent judges to best deserve it.

It may be that Mr. Vernon thought of Willie when he proposed it; for he had a high opinion of the boy's genius. Martelli did not feel so

confident about it, for Stefano, too, was very clever, besides being older, and more experienced in the art. The pupils were divided in their opinions. Many thought it a hopeless task, and gave it up in despair, saying that either Villani or Mortimer was sure to win ; and that it was of no use their trying. While a few, conscious of their own power, said nothing, but worked on quietly and diligently.

Willie could think of little else. He even dreamt about it. He became silent and abstracted ; and spent the greater part of his time, when at home, in his old studio. Mrs. Mortimer took care that he should not be interrupted, for which purpose she kept Gertrude with her as much as possible ; for she knew that “all great things are born of silence.” She did not say, as some mothers would have done—“My son, the time is passing away ; and nothing yet begun or attempted.” She left him to himself. When he looked pale, and when she heard him moaning in his troubled sleep, and saying, “That drapery should fall a little more to the left,” she comforted herself by remembering that it would not be for long.

Every young student knows how difficult it is to work out his own conception ; and the more difficult, the more beautiful that conception is. And some have been tempted in consequence to give it up in despair. But we should never give anything up. It is only to have a little patience and perseverance, and we are sure to succeed at last.

One day Willie met his mother, on her return from town, with a radiant face, and a hastily sketched design in his hand.

"Congratulate me, mamma," exclaimed he, "for the prize is as good as won!"

"I do congratulate you, my son, most sincerely. But you must not say that."

"It sounds presumptuous, I know. But I cannot help feeling as I do. I do not think it is pride, for I prayed while I studied, and God must have put those bright ideas into my head. But I am not going to show you the design. You must wait until it is finished."

"Very well," replied Mrs. Mortimer, "and meanwhile, I shall expect you to resume your evening walks, and make yourself more companionable than you have done of late."

"I beg your pardon, mamma. I know that I have been very rude. And that you have been very kind not to say anything before. But it is all over now—the thinking part that is—I have only to work. I have planned it all—even to the last fold of drapery."

"Should it not fall a little more to the left?" asked his mother with a smile.

"Oh mamma! you must have seen it."

"No indeed. I only heard you talking about it in your sleep."

"How silly of me. But only think of my winning the prize."

"You have not won it yet, Willie."

"But I mean to do so, with God's help."

"Well added, my child; for remember you may be ill, or a thousand things may happen to you before then."

"I had forgotten that. But I will take care of myself, and not work too hard. There is plenty of time."

Although Mrs. Mortimer had great confidence in her son's powers, she could not help wishing that he was less sanguine. What if he should

not win, after all? But she said nothing to damp his youthful ardour; only taking every precaution that his health should not suffer from it.

Alas! for human precaution. Alas! for human love. Alas! for human ambition. It wanted but a few weeks of the period fixed for the works to be sent in, when Willie fell ill, so ill as to be confined to his bed. At first he was very patient, for he thought, "I shall be better soon. There is time enough yet." But when he found himself growing weaker, instead of stronger; and the medical man whom Mr. Vernon had requested to attend him, held out no hope of a speedy recovery, but spoke of a total cessation from all employment, and change of air as soon as he should be able to bear it, the boy's heart sank within him.

"If I could but get up," said he. "One day's work would complete it—I do not think it would hurt me—or if it did I should not care—oh, if I could but finish it!"

"Be patient, my son," replied his mother, soothingly.

"I cannot be patient. I am sure it would not

hurt me—only one day—half a day, if I worked hard, would finish it."

"Do you feel as if you could work hard, Willie?"

"No, mamma," replied the boy, impatiently, "and I never shall while I am forced to remain all day long in this close room. The air would do me good. And perhaps you would let me have a coach to Martelli's, they could not charge much for so short a distance; and I would pay you for it when I have gained the prize."

"I am afraid that you never will gain the prize now, my child."

"I tell you it is mine! Mine all but a few more touches. Oh, mamma, do pray suffer me to go!"

"Let us hear what Doctor Hastings says," replied Mrs. Mortimer. "If he does not object, you shall have a chair to Martelli's, and I will go with you and take care of you. But I am afraid it will not do."

"My own dear, dear mamma!" exclaimed Willie, putting his wasted arms round her neck, and kissing her. "How good you are to me. But when will Doctor Hastings come?"

"I am expecting him every moment."

Willie laid his head back on the pillow, and tried to compose himself; but his hands trembled and his cheeks burned.

Doctor Hastings soon after arrived; but at once refused to consent to Willie's quitting his bed.

"It would kill him!" said he.

"It will kill me to lie here!" exclaimed the young sufferer, impatiently.

Mrs. Mortimer drew the physician aside, and asked him if he were quite sure that the fatigue would be less injurious than the boy's present state of excitement.

"The former must kill him," was the reply. "The latter may, if not controlled. But I have too much faith in the Christian principles of my young friend, to have any fear about that."

Willie groaned; and hid his face in the pillow.

"Who sent this illness, do you think?" asked Doctor Hastings of his youthful patient.

"God, sir."

"And could not God have raised you up ~~now~~ long before this, if it had been His will?"

"Certainly, He could."

"Then we are to conclude that it is not His will. Eh, my young friend?"

"Yes, sir."

"And what follows? Is it enough for us to say in our daily prayers—as words without meaning—'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven'?"

"No, sir; we must feel it, and act it."

"Good. I see that you know what is right."

"And I will do it," said Willie, earnestly. "Forgive me, sir. Forgive me, dear mamma. You shall hear no more complaints. God's will be done. It is something to know that I could have won it if—if it had been good for me to have done so."

"God bless you, my dear boy!" exclaimed the worthy physician, pressing the thin hand which he held in his.

Willie kept his word. When Gertrude, who felt the disappointment almost as much as himself, said that it did appear hard that he should be taken ill just then; he answered,

"Yes, it appears hard to us, my sister. But He knows best."

"And when you had so nearly completed your task."

"It will serve to show what I can do."

"But it will not win the prize. Who do you think will have it?"

"Stefano. Perhaps it may make us better friends. I could like him if he would let me, because he is so clever."

"But is he good as well as clever?"

"I do not know, Gertrude. We are none of us good enough to venture to judge one another."

"I am sure you are very good and patient now."

"You may well lay such emphasis on the word *now*," replied her brother, with a smile.

"Did I? I did not mean to do so."

"Willie has gained the noblest of all victories," said his mother, affectionately, "the victory over himself, and his own murmuring and rebellious heart. That is better than gaining a prize. For the one, there is joy among

the angels of heaven ; while the other can but win the praise of men."

Willie never forgot his mother's words.

"I was afraid that you would be disappointed," said he.

"No, indeed. If it only pleases God to spare my children, and make them good children, I want nothing else for happiness. And has he not spared you to our prayers ? Doctor Hastings thinks you much better ; and hopes that you will be able to get about again in a few weeks."

A burning flush came and went upon the pale cheek of the invalid. While a sigh, followed by a smile, spoke of lingering regret and patient submission.

"It will be too late then," said he. "But never mind, Gertrude, there may be another prize given before long. Who knows?"

Chapter fifty.

" Thy will, O God, not mine, be done,
Never forget to say;
He knoweth what is best for us—
Remember this alway;
And when thy restless wishes rise,
Oh, then kneel down and pray.—E.C.

THE day seldom passed without Martelli looking in to see his young pupil. Sometimes he had only leisure to exchange a few kind and sympathizing words; while at others, he would sit down by the bedside, and once more, at Willie's request, turn to that little Bible which had been such a solace to him in his own weary illness, but which he had since neglected. It put him in mind of those old times, and brought back thoughts and feelings which the cares and business of daily life had well nigh obliterated.

Martelli came in one evening with a counte-

nance of unusual animation. Willie was alone, and looked thoughtful, if not sad.

"Do you know what to-day is?" asked the sculptor.

"Yes, sir: I have not forgotten. I suppose all the works have been sent in by this time?"

"Yes; all."

Willie sighed.

"Oh, if mine were but among them!" exclaimed he.

"It is among them."

"But it is unfinished."

"I have finished it for you."

"But was that right?"

"Certainly: what harm can there be?" There were but a few strokes wanting. The design was all your own, and I went by that. It is a wonderful design."

"But if—if I should win the prize?"

"You are sure to win it!" interrupted the sculptor.

"The question is, will it be fairly mine?"

"Undoubtedly it will."

"It is against the regulations."

"No one will know it."

"But if they should ask whether it is all my own work?"

"They will not ask. If they do, leave it to me."

"Surely you would not say what is not true?" exclaimed the boy; "but I beg your pardon, sir," added he, as a deep flush passed over Martelli's face; "I know you would not."

"Good," said the sculptor, placing his hand caressingly on the head of the invalid; "but scrupulous—over scrupulous. Never fear. Only keep your own secret."

Willie had never had a secret before in his life, and its burden already pressed heavily.

"Hark!" exclaimed the sculptor.

"It is only Gertrude."

"You must take care of Gertrude. 'Little pitchers have long ears,' as the proverb says. Not a word;" and he began to talk of something else.

"Is anything the matter, brother?" asked Gertrude, presently.

"No; why do you ask?"

"Because you do not look like yourself."

Willie did not feel like himself. His temples throbbed ; and he felt sick and bewildered, like one in a dream.

Gertrude told her mother that she was quite sure that Willie was not so well, although he did not complain ; and Mrs. Mortimer, when she looked upon his flushed countenance and felt his burning hands, thought so too.

"It is nothing," said Willie, in answer to her inquiries. "Only a little good news that Martelli brought me this evening."

"I am glad that it was good news."

"He has sent in my work with the rest," said the boy, in a low voice.

"But it was unfinished."

"There were but a few strokes wanting."

"And Martelli thinks that it will do?"

"Yes ; he has sent it in." Willie turned away his face as he spoke.

"I understand," said his mother, after a pause.

The boy looked round with a startled gaze, but she only smiled.

"I understand the host of new hopes and fears which have once more sprung up in this

ambitious little heart, and set it beating so fast."

"Yes, I cannot help thinking—I cannot help hoping. Oh, mamma, I had quite given it up. I was feeling so peaceful and happy. Why has this temptation fallen upon me?"

"My son," replied Mrs. Mortimer, touched by the wild earnestness of his manner; "is it not written: 'There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.'"^{*}

"O, that I could escape," thought Willie; and he knew the way, but shrank from it. "After all, perhaps," argued he, "they may not question me. I may not even win. It would be ungrateful to Martelli to say anything, after his kindness to me. But I wish he had not done it; oh that I dared consult with mamma—although I know what she would advise."

In her heart, Mrs. Mortimer was not altogether sorry for what had happened, understanding it,

as she did only in part. Her maternal pride was gratified by the thought that her son's work, unfinished as it was, would be brought before those competent to judge of its merits. It seemed to her a reward for the submission which he had shown under so great a disappointment. But she could not comprehend what made him so restless ; and why he now shrank from all idea of gaining the prize, as eagerly as he had once dwelt upon it.

Gertrude was delighted, and told Martelli so when she saw him ; for she and the sculptor were great friends. He used to say that if it had not been for her, he should never have had Willie for a pupil ; and that the boy might have been still plodding on in his study, attempting everything and doing nothing well ; and living and dying unknown and unappreciated, as thousands, equally gifted, had done before him, for want of a helping hand. Gertrude liked to hear him talk thus, and tell Willie how thankful he ought to be all his life to his little sister.

"And if it had not been for you," said Gertrude on one occasion, when the conversation had

taken the above turn, "Willie would never have thought of sending in his work with the others ; and so lost all chance of winning the prize."

"It was very silly of him, Gertrude, was it not ?" replied Martelli, with an arch glance at her brother, who smiled faintly.

"Yes, I think so, indeed."

"I understand from Willie," observed Mrs. Mortimer, "that it was quite unfinished."

"Nothing but the humility of true genius, my dear madam," answered the sculptor. "I assure you that it required only a few touches, the want of which is scarcely to be discovered."

This time Willie did not smile.

"What sort of a work is Stefano's," asked Gertrude.

"I fear that is not a fair question, my child," interrupted her mother.

"Oh, yes, perfectly fair. It is splendid ! a *chef d'œuvre* ! I wish that there were two prizes."

"And Louis Armand?" asked Gertrude, who knew most of the pupils by name, and

some by sight, having seen them with her brother.

"Should have the prize for industry, if there was one."

"Poor Louis!" said Willie.

"God has certainly not given him genius," observed Martelli. "But he will get on in the world, nevertheless, far better than those who have more talent and less application."

"Besides, Louis is a good boy," said Gertrude.

"What do you mean by a good boy?" asked the sculptor.

"One who reads his Bible, and would not do anything wrong, if he knew it. For it is of no use reading, mamma says, if we do not endeavour to act up to what we read."

"And are you always a good girl?" asked Martelli, drawing her towards him.

"No, sir, not always, I am afraid; but I try to be. And when I have committed a fault, I ask God to forgive it for Jesus Christ's sake, and keep me from doing the same thing again. We are none of us *quite* good, mamma says."

"I am sure that I am not," murmured the sculptor involuntarily.

"Oh yes, you are. You are my own good Mr. Martelli!" replied the girl affectionately.
"Is he not, Willie dear?"

"Yes," said Willie, "he is very kind—very kind indeed."

"I do not know who could help being kind to you, my boy," exclaimed the sculptor. "And were you not kind to me when I was ill, and all alone in the world? I shall never forget how you used to sit night after night by my sick couch, reading to me out of this very book." And he placed his hand upon the little Bible as he spoke. "It seems a long time ago. How much has happened since then."

"Yes," said Willie. "The poor, ignorant boy, who could scarcely model a limb correctly, is now,—thanks to your tuition—contending for a prize."

"Ay, and will win it!" added the sculptor.

But the glow had faded away from the flushed cheek of his young pupil; and Martelli's confidence in his success made him sigh. Mrs.

Mortimer's glance rested inquiringly on his changing features. "After all," thought she, "it may arise only from the languor and weakness of a long illness. His enthusiasm, his youthful ambition, will return again after a time. It is well, perhaps, as it is."

Chapter Sixty.

Take back the laurel-wreath: I ask
 Of Heaven but to stand
Hereafter at my Saviour's feet,
 With a palm-branch in my hand.—E. C.

THE eventful day at length arrived. The works had been duly examined and criticised; and the elected judges sat in counsel together, although there was but one opinion among them all. Able connoisseurs were those judges. Men well known in the world of art and science, and whose judgment was beyond dispute. Mr. Vernon and Martelli were in an adjoining room, waiting the result.

"Do you think that he will win?" asked the former.

"I do."

"I am a very foolish old man, I know," continued Mr. Vernon; "but I have set my whole heart upon it."

"Fear not," replied the sculptor. "He must win. It is a wonderful design!"

The students, accompanied by their friends and relatives, occupied the great hall. They now saw each other's performance for the first time, having hitherto worked apart. At the sight of Willie's and Stefano's, most of the other boys gave up all hope. Stefano wished for the great hammer that he might dash his own to pieces, beautiful as he had deemed it, and as it undoubtedly was. He ground his teeth together in an agony of rage, while a deep red flush burned on either cheek.

Willie leant heavily on his mother's arm. Every one could see how ill he had been—how ill he still was. Mrs. Mortimer, too, looked pale, but it was with happiness. She knew that, if God spared him, her Willie would be a great man. She was proud of him. Willie felt that she was, and trembled. Many a mother envied Mrs. Mortimer that day; and a few, gazing

upon the frail, attenuated form of the gifted boy, pittied her: for they said, "Such do not live long." But it is not always thus.

Gertrude stood near her brother's work. Her face was radiant with joy; and her heart beat fast when she heard how every one praised it. When a stranger, attracted by its beauty, paused to ask whose it was, Gertrude answered readily, "Our Willie's," pointing to him as she spoke; while the gentleman smiled sadly, for he too, had had a Willie.

Most of the students gathered round Willie's and Stefano's works, as if theirs had been the only two in the room.

"Whoever wins," said Louis Armand—and his voice faltered as his glance fell upon his own laborious and neglected performance—"whoever wins, let us all be friends, and be ready to congratulate rather than envy the victor. What say you, Stefano? What say you, Mortimer?" But the former frowned, and the latter bent down his head. Louis was disappointed. "I wanted to see you two shake hands," said he, "both now, and afterwards when it is all settled."

"Pshaw!" exclaimed Stefano, turning away;

while Willie shrank back, much to his mother's surprise, without making the slightest attempt to conciliate his rival.

"Never mind, Louis," said Mrs. Mortimer, in a whisper. "Blessed are the peace-makers; you have done what you could."

"Yes," replied the boy, with a sigh; but as usual, in vain.

Mrs. Mortimer was about to speak, but at that moment every voice became suddenly hushed. Mr. Vernon entered the hall, accompanied by Martelli, and followed by the judges. His round, benevolent face was beaming with smiles. The sculptor appeared to be scarcely less pleased; while the judges looked grave, as judges should, but well satisfied with themselves and their own decision. They took their seats, all but one, who remained standing ready to address the assemblage. He was one well-known to fame, whose name has since passed into a household word. He had no need to command silence. One might have heard a pin drop, or the quick breathing of many a young heart.

He said little, but that little was to the purpose. He referred to the bright promise of

future talent which he had that day beheld. He regretted that there was but one prize. He congratulated Martelli on having such pupils, and the students on having such a master. He saw before him, he said, many a youthful brow destined to wear the laurel crown, when his was mouldering in the grave ; referring particularly to the works of Stefano Villani and one or two others ; and finally awarded the prize to William Mortimer.

Gertrude forgot where she was, and clapped her hands for joy ; at which the judges could not help smiling. Willie trembled violently when he heard his name called ; so violently that Martelli had to pass his arm round him in order to support him. The crowd made way for them as they advanced.

“ How pale he is,” said one.

“ No wonder. He has had a dangerous illness, and this is the first time that he has been out since.”

“ He looks young,” said another.

“ Ay, a mere boy. What will he be when he is a man ?”

“ If he lives,” added a pitying voice.

"I do not believe that he did it!" exclaimed one of the student's passionately, between his ground teeth. The master must have helped him."

"François!" replied Louis Armand. "You should not say that, knowing, as we do, that the master is too honourable to have done it. And that Mortimer is too honourable to have permitted him to have done what was unjust. We know them both too well."

Willie heard all, and hurried on as well as he could for the crowd, without daring to look at his young champion. In a few moments he stood, with downcast eyes and burning cheeks, before his judges.

"Look up, my boy," whispered Mr. Vernon, encouragingly. "There is nothing to be ashamed of. Why do you tremble thus?"

"I have been ill, sir."

"True; I had forgotten that. We must not keep you standing too long."

"Can it be possible," exclaimed one of the judges involuntarily, "that the work to which we have awarded the prize can really be the unassisted performance of one so young?"

"I will answer for that," replied Martelli.

"What! every stroke? All this minute and exquisite finish?"

The sculptor was again about to reply to a question proposed rather in admiration than doubt. But Willie interrupted him:

"No," said he; and his clear, distinct tones rang through the hall. "The work is not *all* mine. I have broken the regulations, and do not deserve the prize. Give it to Villani."

"The boy is mad!" muttered Martelli. But when he felt his increasing weight, and saw his white, drooping face, his heart was touched, and lifting him in his arms, he bore him hastily from the room, followed by his mother and sister.

In a few moments the sculptor returned prepared to give that explanation which every one was longing to hear. He now spoke only the simple truth. How he had gone to Willie's little studio, when he was so ill, and been struck with admiration at the wonderful beauty of the object which there met his view; an admiration confirmed by the unanimous verdict that day given. He assured them that it wanted only a few touches; an hour's work at the most. There was no hope of Willie being able to finish it in

time. He had thought it a pity that the poor boy should not have a chance with the rest. So, without saying a word to any one, he locked the door, and sat down and completed it—by completing it he did not mean improved it. He could not do that.

“Young as William Mortimer is,” said the generous Italian, “he has already outstripped his old master. Gentlemen, I love this boy even as if he were my own child. I have no one else to love. But I fear I have done him harm instead of good ; and am very, very sorry. If there is any fault, it rests with me, and not with him. He was ill in bed, and knew nothing about it until it was too late, and the works had been sent in.”

Martelli dashed the tears from his eyes as he finished speaking : and sat down amidst the deep sympathy of those present. Mr. Vernon extended his hand and warmly pressed that of the sculptor. He did not look at all disappointed.

The judges consulted together in whispers, and then the same gentleman who had before spoken rose up, and referring to the regulations, early showed that William Mortimer had for-

feited his claim to the prize : which he had now much satisfaction—he would not say much pleasure, after the touching scene which they had just witnessed—in presenting to Stefano Villani. He could not sit down, he added, without taking this opportunity of paying his sincere and public tribute of admiration to one whose noble truthfulness was only equalled by his wonderful genius—he referred to William Mortimer.

An involuntary burst of applause arose as he concluded. Stefano turned and bowed ; but it was not for him that those shouts were raised. It was not his name which echoed from lip to lip, accompanied with praise and honour. He had won the prize. But Willie had won the hearts of all present.

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Chapter Seventy.

It is over. Youthful soldier,
In the battle-field of life,
Hearts for prizes thou hast won,
Noble end of noble strife.—E. C.

“MAMMA,” said Willie, as soon as he was able to speak; “dear mamma, you are not very much disappointed, are you?”

“I am not disappointed at all, my son.”

“I am glad of that. I was afraid that you would be, a little. But I remembered what you said about wishing only to see us good children.”

“And about the angels,” interrupted Gertrude. “Mamma, do you think they rejoiced in heaven to-day, when Willie gave up that beautiful prize, rather than say what was not true?”

“Very likely,” replied Mrs. Mortimer, smiling on the little, earnest face, lifted up so eagerly to hers—but it was a tearful smile. “Willie has done what was right; and I am quite sure that he feels far happier than if he had gained the prize.”

"I have never been happy," replied the boy, "since my work was sent in—since I had a secret to hide from you, my dear mamma. Never until now. And I never mean to have another secret as long as I live."

"Hark!" exclaimed Gertrude. "What was that? They are cheering! Somehow I cannot help feeling sorry that Stefano should win. I should not have minded so much if it had been **Louis Armand**."

"But Stefano deserves it, sister, for his talents."

"And so does Louis, for his good-nature."

"I am afraid," said Willie, laughingly, "that there are no prizes given for good-nature."

"On earth," interrupted Mrs. Mortimer. "Louis Armand has been taught to look beyond the praises of this world for his reward."

"Hark!" said Gertrude. "They are cheering again. I thought I heard your name, Willie."

"Mamma," exclaimed the boy, turning very pale, "I hope they have not given me the prize after all. It would not be fair—it would not be just; and I am so happy without it."

"You need not fear," replied Mrs. Mortimer.

“Gertrude must have been mistaken. But we shall hear all about it now, for here comes Martelli.”

The good sculptor looked agitated and excited; and the tears rushed into his eyes, as Willie put his thin arms round his neck, and whispered:

“Forgive me—pray forgive me. I could not help saying what I did.”

“My child! my poor child!” replied he, “there is nothing to forgive. You were right, and I was wrong.”

“Then you are not angry with me?”

“Certainly not, my brave little pupil !”

“I am so glad !”

“Has Stefano got the prize?” asked Gertrude.

“Yes; and he deserves it. But I could not congratulate him from my heart. God forgive me.”

“What were they all cheering about?” asked Gertrude.

“What do you think, little one?” and Martelli’s eyes twinkled with delight.

“Why I thought I heard our Willie’s name once—but it must have been a mistake.”

“It was no mistake, my child. Mrs. Mortimer, I wish you had been there. I wish that you could

have heard Mr. C——'s eloquent speech. Every word went straight to the heart, and I believe, as he said, came straight from the heart. We are sure to be eloquent when this is the case."

"But what did he say?" interrupted Gertrude, impatiently.

"I cannot remember all now. But it will be in the paper to-morrow, and then you can read it for yourself. First, he had to give poor Stefano the prize; and I do not think he liked doing it, any more than I did seeing it done. Although, to be sure, it was only right and just after all. And afterwards he could not sit down, he said, 'without paying his sincere and public tribute of admiration to one, whose noble truthfulness was only equalled by his wonderful genius—he referred to William Mortimer.' These were his own words. And he said a good deal more, which you can read to-morrow. And then all the people cheered; and I slipped out for fear I should make a fool of myself."

And Martelli twinkled away another bright tear as he spoke—tears which did honour to his kind and benevolent heart.

"Oh, mamma!" exclaimed Gertrude, clapping her hands.

ping her hands. "To think of our Willie's name being in the papers!"

"And not for the last time, I will venture to prophesy," replied the sculptor.

"Take care," said the happy mother. "Take care, Mr. Martelli, or you will spoil my boy."

"No fear of that, madam."

"No fear of that, mamma. Indeed, I never felt less inclined to be proud in my whole life; or more humble and thankful."

"God keep you so, my child; both now and ever."

"Mamma," said Willie, "if it had not been for you, I should not have acted as I did to-day; loving you as I do, if I had thought that your heart was set upon my gaining the prize, I am afraid that I should never have had courage to disappoint you. But I remembered what you said—what you always say—that all you want to make you happy, is to see us good children—God's children."

"Yes, that is all," replied Mrs. Mortimer. "That is everything. If you seek to please your Heavenly Father, you will be sure to please me."

"You cannot think how I felt," continued

Willie, after a pause, "when Gertrude said the other day, that it was of no use our reading the Bible, unless we acted it."

"I was only repeating mamma's words, brother."

"God's words," added Mrs. Mortimer, softly. "'Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.'"^{*}

"Well, at any rate they came home to the heart. The Bible says—'He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house; he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.'[†] These are solemn words, mamma."

"Very solemn, my child."

Martelli's countenance flushed, and he looked thoughtful and abstracted. They were interrupted by the entrance of Louis Armand.

"I am not come to sympathize with you for losing the prize," said he, smilingly extending his hand to Willie :—"only to see how you are."

"Better, thank you. Quite well now."

"You look better. After all, I do not know but that I may congratulate you on having won a far nobler prize—the approval of your own

* James i. 22. † Psalm ci. 7.

conscience. Did you hear us cheering you just now? I wanted you to distinguish my voice."

"I might have been sure that it would be one of the kindest and heartiest," answered Willie.

"There is some one else who wants to shake hands with you, if you will admit him."

Willie was just then in a humour to shake hands with the whole world. And his warm and friendly grasp effectually dispelled any misgivings which Stefano Villani might have felt as to his reception.

"I should not have come," said he, "if Louis had not made me. I was afraid that you would not like to see me just now."

"Why not?"

"You may not have heard, perhaps"—

"Yes, you have won the prize, Stefano; and from my heart I am glad of it."

"But I should not have won it, if it had not been for you."

"I only did what was my duty—what I ought to have done before. The prize is fairly yours. And now I hope that we shall never be rivals again."

"Never," said Stefano; and they again shook

hands warmly; while the good Louis rubbed his hands together with delight. Even Gertrude's countenance relaxed, and she felt pleased that they were friends.

Mr. Vernon came in for a few minutes, while Martelli was gone to procure a conveyance for the widow and her children to return to their home, Willie being too weak to walk. He was in a great hurry, having invited the judges to dine with him.

"God bless you, my boy," said he to Willie, "You shall never want a friend while I live." And then he turned and shook hands with Mrs. Mortimer and Gertrude; and nodded kindly to the young students. "Do not go away," added he to the latter. "I am going myself directly. I wish I were not. But business must be attended to. Take care of him," said he to Mrs. Mortimer, and pointing to Willie, as he spoke. "He is worth taking care of. You will see me again in a day or two."

Mrs. Mortimer said that she should be very happy; and the children looked it.

"Poor little Gertrude!" exclaimed the old gentleman, passing his hand kindly over her

head. "This has been a disappointment for you, I am afraid. But never mind. It will all turn out for the best, you will see. But I must be off. God bless you all, once more." And Mr. Vernon hurried away to rejoin his friends.

Chapter Eighty.

God's goodness oft amazes,
E'en those who love Him best ;
He turns our prayers to praises,
And soothes our fears to rest.—E.C.

THE next time that Dr. Hastings came, Willie eagerly watched his countenance, while he was feeling his pulse and making the usual inquiries.

"I am better sir, am I not?"

"Yes, my young friend; a great deal better, I am happy to say. We shall soon have you all right again now, please God. The next thing to be thought of is change of air."

"That is what I wanted to talk to you about," said Willie. "Is it absolutely necessary that I should leave home. The air is very good here; d it is almost in the country, you know."

"Almost, but not quite. You do not think of returning to your profession, I hope?"

"No sir, not until I am stronger. But cannot I get stronger here?"

"Impossible—humanly speaking. But what is your objection to the country—suppose we say the sea-side? I think you once told me that you had never seen the great ocean?"

"Never, sir."

"My dear boy, it will do you good every way; both mind and body; and invigorate and give a freshness to your ideas."

Willie sighed.

"I should like to know your objection to leaving home," said the doctor.

"I have none, sir, save the expense. I have often longed to look upon the sea. But we are poor, and my mother works hard enough already."

"I understand," said Dr. Hastings.

"I have been ill a long time now," continued Willie, with a smile, "and am not so impatient as I was at first. I am getting accustomed to it, I think; and if remaining here will only retard my recovery, and not prevent it, I would rather suffer a little longer, than my mother

should be put to any additional expense or inconvenience on my account."

"Good," replied the doctor. "We will see what can be done."

"Thank you, sir," said Willie. "You are very kind. If you can arrange this for me I shall be so glad. And I promise not to try to do anything until you give me leave—but only to get well as fast as I can."

"Leave it to me," said the doctor, as he arose to go. "I will manage it. And so you lost the prize after all, my young friend."

"Yes, sir."

"Never mind, it was better than winning it. I heard all about it. I will see you again soon."

Willie returned to the sitting-room with a light heart. Mrs. Mortimer and Gertrude were still busily at work. The latter had become very quick and skilful in the use of her needle; and was able to be of great service to her mother. Willie was now well enough to draw the patterns for the screens; and all kinds of beautiful wreaths, and designs for their worsted work; which his sister declared that it would be quite a pleasure to copy.

"Well, what does Dr. Hastings say to you?" asked his mother, as he entered.

"That I am better—much better."

"Thank God for that. Does he talk of your leaving home?"

"Yes, we talked about it. But I think it is very likely I shall be able to do without."

"What does Dr. Hastings think?"

"He did not give me a positive answer; I am to see him again soon."

"I would rather you went," said Mrs. Mortimer. "Every one says how much good it will do you."

"But only think of the expense, mamma."

"That is already provided for. I am richer than you imagine, my child." And then she told him about the ten bright sovereigns which she had laid by towards getting him placed with the sculptor Martelli, and which Mr. Vernon had so generously refused to take, bidding her keep them for Willie until he wanted them. "So you see that they are your own, my dear boy," added she, with a smile.

"Oh, mamma, I cannot bear to think how hard you must have worked for them," said Willie.

"It was a labour of love. But I might have gone on working a long time, if God had not sent your kind benefactor to assist us."

"Yes, indeed; it was a happy day for us all when Gertrude brought him home. I little thought, as I sat toiling away in my little studio, and doing every thing the wrong way for want of knowing better; I little thought what was in store for me."

"Who can tell," said Gertrude, "what may be in store for you at this present moment?"

As she spoke there was a knock at the door, and Mr. Vernon's well-known voice heard, asking if he might come in.

"We were just talking about you," exclaimed Gertrude, as she sprang up to admit him; while Willie, with a somewhat slower step, placed a chair for his kind friend.

"And so you are better," said the old gentleman, retaining the boy's thin hand in his, and gazing earnestly into his pale face; "really better?"

"Yes, sir; really better, I hope."

"I hope so, too, my child. You have had a long illness. He is looking better, Mrs. Mortimer."

"Yes, sir, thank God."

"And now, my dear madam, I am going to ask a great favour of you."

"Of me!" exclaimed Mrs. Mortimer. "Then it is already granted."

"Stop," said the old gentleman. "You must hear what it is first. I want you to spare me this boy for a few months."

"A few months!" repeated the mother.

"Yes. I am going to Italy, and I should like to take him with me. What do you say, Willie?"

"Oh, sir! oh, Mr. Vernon!" exclaimed the boy, turning very pale, and clasping his hands together. "But, mamma, you are weeping; I will not go unless you wish it."

"If I weep it is for joy on your account," replied his mother.

"Then I may conclude that it is all settled," said Mr. Vernon, interrupting her grateful thanks. He never liked being thanked for what he did. "Do you know anything about Italy, my boy?"

"I have dreamt of it, sir."

"Most young artists do; but I venture to promise that you will not be disappointed. How

soon can he be ready to start?" asked he, turning to Mrs. Mortimer. "I do not want to hurry you; but partings are sad things, and the sooner they are over the better. I saw Dr. Hastings this morning, and he thinks him quite well enough to travel. He also said something about Willie's not liking to leave home. Eh, my boy!"

Willie coloured, and Mr. Vernon shortly afterwards took his departure; putting in his head again, after he had wished them good morning, to tell Mrs. Mortimer that she need not trouble herself about Willie's outfit, as he had already given the necessary orders. Had he once more turned back, he would have seen the whole family on their knees, pouring out their grateful hearts in praise and thanksgiving before the throne of grace.

Gertrude was right when she said that they little knew what was in store for them. We little know what good things God hath prepared, even in this world, for those who love Him, and put their whole trust in His mercy.

A few weeks afterwards, Willie departed for Italy with his kind benefactor, who promised to afford him every facility for pursuing his studies,

as soon as he should be strong enough ; and to take care of him as if he had been his own son. Mrs. Mortimer had no fears. She could commend her child, in perfect faith, to the keeping of his heavenly Father. Like the boy himself, she was full of hope and thankfulness.

Gertrude appeared to grieve the most, until Martelli, to comfort her, offered to teach her Italian, as a surprise for her brother upon his return. When their lessons were over—and Gertrude was a quick and diligent pupil—they frequently read the Bible together. The sculptor, as we have said, with all his talent, was of a humble and child-like spirit, and was not ashamed to become a learner in his turn, while his little teacher explained to him, in her simple way, those beautiful Gospel truths which make us wise unto salvation. The lonely and world-wearied artist often spoke of those peaceful and happy days wherein he was thus, through God's grace—who frequently condescends to make use of the humblest instruments—brought to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus; and enabled in fulness of faith to cast all his sins and cares upon Him who careth for us.

And now we have little more to relate. As Louis Armand told Stefano Villani, in answer to his inquiries on the subject :

"It does one's heart good to hear the proud little sister, and the meek and joyful mother, talking of 'our Willie' now ; and of all that he does, and intends doing—if it please God to spare him. There is no doubt," added he, "but that Mr. Vernon will make him his heir."

"I hope he may," said Stefano ; "he deserves it."

THE ANGEL IN THE HOUSE.

Take him not home so soon, O blessed Lord !
Our child—our little child—our only one !
And yet Thou knowest best—Thy will be done.—E. C.

ALL was hushed in the chamber where a little new-born baby-boy lay sleeping softly by its mother's side. Both had been ill—so ill, that the seal of baptism was already set on that young brow ; and they called him Willie. The mother slept not, although her weary eyes were closed. But every now and then she opened them, to gaze fondly upon her newly-found treasure, while a happy smile rested on her pale face. And when she looked, she prayed. Can any woman be a mother, and not pray ?

The servants moved to and fro with noiseless steps ; doors opened and shut without sound ; forms flitted about like those we see in our

dreams ; voices spoke in whispers ; all was stillness and repose. The doctor had said, that they must be kept perfectly quiet.

Weeks passed away, and the young mother was well enough to sit up, holding her baby in her arms, for she would not admit that it was any weight. Her love made it appear none to her. In truth it was a tiny thing ! Such little feet and hands ! Everything little but the eyes, and they were large and bright, and like two stars. The mother held him close to her heart, she felt as if she could not hold him close enough. He was unto her like one restored from the dead ; and that heart was full of love and thankfulness.

Friends and relatives were now admitted. Willie was not what is called a fine child, and many saw nothing to admire in his pale but singularly intelligent little face ; and yet the most were struck by it. Some said : "He should be a poet, with such a brow as that !" Others : "A mathematician." But his mother only prayed : "Lord Jesus, make him Thy child."

Every day, as the warm weather advanced, the infant appeared to gain health and strength.

They took him into the green fields, and showed him the little lambs at play, and the bright flowers, and the white butterflies flitting past. He liked being out ; and the sweet air was as a medicine to him.

Best of all Willie liked being sung to. And his mother would frequently sit singing by the hour together, in order to gratify him ; but never anything but hymns, it would have seemed to her like a profanation.

It was a touching and beautiful sight to behold him at the hour of prayer, lying perfectly still upon his mother's knee, with his little hands seemingly folded together—we say seemingly, for he was but an infant—and his smiling eyes glancing upwards ;

While ever and anon a sound is heard,
Just as if he too were softly praying ;
And God, perchance, knows what he is saying.

His mother once told a dear friend, that, ever since Willie's birth, she had felt as if there was an angel with them in the house. It was not the same house ; it was not the same world. Her heart seemed to be filled with love towards all human-kind—but especially little children.

She would have done anything for a little child ; even the child of a stranger. She felt like a child herself. She laughed, she danced, she sang, she read children's books, and studied, and took an interest in all their little ways and pleasures.

About this time she had many trials. But somehow they appeared less difficult to bear. Looking on the sweet face of her boy, it was impossible to be sad. It was impossible not to feel thankful, and trustful, and very, very happy. A dozen times a day she thanked God for her child ; and asked Him to be pleased to take care of him, and make him His child.

“ To a mother's ear there is no such music in all the world, as when her little one first says, ‘ Mamma, mamma.’ The beaming countenance, the outstretched arms, the silvery voice, the words—sweet, and solemn, and never to be forgotten—‘ Mamma, mamma.’ ”

The mother never asked great things for her child ; but only that he might be kept very near to Jesus all his life through. Whether that life should be long or short, prosperous or otherwise, she left in His hands—not, perhaps, without trembling, but in perfect faith.

How often—looking into the future as we are frequently tempted to do, although well aware that it is not ours to know—she heard, in imagination, the patterning of childish feet walking by her side to the house of God ; a childish voice mingling in prayer and psalm ; a childish face lifted up inquiringly to hers, with one of those simple and yet difficult questions about heavenly things, which only children ask ; and then she read and prayed, in order that, when the time came, she might be able to answer him aright.

She loved to think of the morning and evening prayer lisped at her knee, and of the hymns which she meant to teach him—especially her own favourite :—

“ Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,
Look upon a little child,” &c.

About this time she learned a great many hymns and pieces of poetry, intended for the young, and in which our literature has become, of late years, very rich. Some one has said that they cared little who made a nation’s laws, so long as they might write its ballads. It is a solemn and a glorious task to write those songs

of childhood, which haunt us all our lives through, either for good or evil.

The mother might often be seen with her old school-books open before her, learning in order that she might teach. On the pages of some were still visible the traces of bitter tears shed over hard tasks, or what seemed to be very hard then. And she thought how she would endeavour to make it only a labour of love to her little Willie.

Some one once said in her hearing, that it was a weary world ; and that it always made her feel sad to look upon young children, and think of the many trials and troubles which were before them. But that Christian mother never felt sad. She knew that her boy would not have one trial or trouble for which there was not a ‘needs be.’ Such was her own experience, after a short but changeful life. Such was her sweet faith in her heavenly Father’s chastening love.

Alas ! will it be always thus ? Will that faith hold out when He taketh away the desire of her eyes by a stroke ? Will she still be enabled to say, “It is well !” or, with the patriarch of old, “The Lord giveth, and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.”

And now a change came over the child. He did not appear to suffer, and seldom cried, but he grew pale, and thin, and hollow-eyed, and was evidently wasting away. Medical aid was resorted to in vain. The mother took her boy to the Great Physician. She laid him at the feet of Jesus, and prayed, "Lord, have mercy upon me. Lord, heal my child; nevertheless, not my will, but Thine, be done."

Day and night he was never out of her arms. She was jealous if any one else took him, thinking to relieve her. Her only relief was to hold him to her heart, to gaze on his sweet face, and feel that he was still hers. Larger and larger grew those wonderful eyes as the child faded away from earth; and seldom did they wander for long from his mother's face, except when closed in sleep. He frequently smiled. It was a blessing to think that there was no suffering—no wild moaning of infant-pain—saddest of all sounds, having no other language in which to express itself.

No more dreams of a bright future that was not to be. No more learning of hymns, and nursery rhymes. The old-school books were put away. But the Bible remained. With God's

Word in our hands—but above all, in our hearts—we can never be quite desolate.

The dying child made one at the hour of prayer. Still lay motionless on his mother's knee, although the little voice was hushed. Still lifted up those wondering eyes to heaven ; and sometimes smiled, as if he knew that he was going Home.

One bright day, when the sun shone, and the birds sang, and all looked blithe and glad, the little child fell asleep in his mother's arms, and never awoke again. Happy child ! Happy mother ! Your dear one is safe in heaven—taken away, it may be, from the evil to come. And yet we know that “no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous : nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.” It is natural for you to weep. Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus. Jesus pities you. Jesus loves you. He chastens but in love. Hereafter we shall know this. Until then, let us believe, and trust, and submit.

“They laid him in his little grave,
Amid the flowers of spring,
When the green corn began to wave,
And the glad birds to sing.

And happy voices were around,
When his was silent in the ground."

The mother was alone. There was no one to call her mother again ; except in dreams when the haunting voice came back and said "Mamma ! Mamma !" But we are wrong. She was not alone, for Jesus was with her. He who has said "Come unto me, all ye who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

The angel in the house was now a real angel in heaven. She had never asked anything for him but that he might be one of Christ's lambs. He was safe now in the fold above. The little childish voice which she had longed to hear mingling in prayer and psalm, was now singing the new song in a Better Land.

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time: "Mamma says th

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have time I will soon ren

"I do not want to
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should be so." She
leaned back pale and
she was still to play in
permission to he took his
hour before her watch and
looked at minutes of the
Campbell never move
for her lips kept

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